THE REIGN

OF

DOCTOR JOSEPH GASPARD RODERICK

DE FRANCIA,

In Paraguay;

BEING

AN ACCOUNT OF A SIX YEARS' RESIDENCE
IN THAT REPUBLIC,

FROM JULY, 1819—TO MAY, 1825.

BY

MESSRS. RENGGER AND LONGCHAMPS.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH OF J. R. RENGGER,
DOCTOR AND NATIVE OF SWITZERLAND.

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PREFACE.

On the first of May, 1818, Mr. Longchamps and myself embarked for Buenos Ayres, with the intention of proceeding thence either to Chili or to Paraguay. The object of our voyage was to collect some fresh materials for the natural history of those countries—an employment for which our acquaintance with medicine had given us some facilities. As soon as we reached Buenos Ayres, after a passage of only sixty days, we made the necessary inquiries respecting the countries which we had proposed to visit, and, at last, selected Paraguay as being the place least known, and being then more settled than any other of the provinces. Although, at that time, Doctor Francia had been at the head of affairs for many years, in Paraguay, yet, not the most distant information respecting his government appeared to have reached Buenos Ayres; it was generally supposed that the province was in a state of profound tranquillity. On the third of August we again embarked, and ascended the Parana as far as Corrientes, a town standing on the left bank of that river,

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near the place of its junction with the river Paraguay. During this voyage, which lasted seven weeks, we had an opportunity of tracing the ruinous effects of Artigas's government. One of his lieutenants, who was at the head of a body of troops, consisting entirely of Indians from the destroyed missions of Entre Rios, was then in command at Corrientes. His depredations, which were particularly injurious to the trade of Paraguay, interrupted all intercourse with the latter country; and it was not until eight months afterwards, when the Indians withdrew, that the communications were restored. We were but too happy to be able to leave a place, where the most complete anarchy prevailed. Here, likewise, as well as at Buenos Ayres, no one knew any thing of Doctor Francia, unless it was, that he had established the greatest order in his country, to which several families had fled as a place of refuge, from the persecutions of Artigas. We proceeded up the Paraguay, and arrived at Assumption on the 30th of July, 1819. We were struck with astonishment, when the individuals to whom we had letters, recommended us to observe the utmost circumspection in every part of our conduct, without making any further explanation. Fortunately, an English physician, Doctor Parlet, apprised us of the character of Francia, and the nature of his government; and we found his information of use to us in our very first interview with the Dictator. However, all that had been

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committed by Doctor Francia, up to that time, was only a prelude to the grand spectacle, of which we were the forced witnesses for six years. The history of our residence at Paraguay, and the manner in which we were employed there, form the subjects of the present work, and of another on the natural history of that country. It will be sufficient then to state here, that it pleased the Dictator, in the month of May, 1825, to grant us leave to depart in a vessel which was bound for Buenos Ayres, and that we availed ourselves of that permission.

We had scarcely got beyond the frontier of Paraguay, when we were assailed with inquiries concerning Doctor Francia. Such was the complete ignorance about him, which prevailed even at the very entrance of his province! Again, at Buenos Ayres, where we stayed several months; then at Brazil, where we were obliged to put in for repairs; and lastly in Europe, we had reason to be satisfied, that the Dictator of Paraguay was an object of equal curiosity. Every body appeared to form a notion of his own as to the character of Francia, according as reliance was placed on the false and contradictory stories of travellers, who had visited the South American coast. By some he was looked upon as a philosopher, who, being anxious to secure his fellow-countrymen from the miseries of revolution, and to introduce civilization amongst them, had resolved upon keeping them isolated from the rest of

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the world, whilst other states were the prey of civil war. Others again regarded him as an usurper, whose object was to aggrandize himself by the ruin of his country. A third party, remembering the revival of a certain religious order in Europe, the name of which is inseparable from that of Paraguay, thought that they saw in Francia, an agent of the Jesuits; whilst the enemies of independence in South America were pleased at the prospect of finding, in the Dictator, a supporter of the fallen power, who would revenge its wrongs.

In order to enable the public to appreciate the character of this mysterious personage, we have resolved upon presenting this part of our travels in a separate form. Although I stand forward as the editor, I think it proper to state, that the greater part of the facts have occurred to Mr. Longchamps, as well as to myself; and it is with our mutual privity that the narrative is given to the world. Perhaps the best security which we can offer for the truth of this picture, is simply the statement, that it might have cost us our heads to have suffered ourselves to be deceived as to the character of Doctor Francia. Thus it is, that the impulse of self-preservation will oblige the traveller, who passes into the wilds of vast continents, to study, even though he may not be a naturalist, the habits of the tyger or the jaghar.

The history of Paraguay, from its conquest to the period of its liberation, has been written with sufficient

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accuracy by several authors; this was another reason with me not to suppress materials which will serve, hereafter, for the continuation of its authentic annals. At no remote era, perhaps, the republics of South America may expect to enjoy a high degree of prosperity, and be enabled to exercise a salutary influence over the governments of Europe. When that shall take place, the world will, no doubt, be curious to trace the steps by which they proceeded to such a destiny, and the circumstances which attended their progress.

Hence, then, the importance of Paraguay is not to be estimated by its present condition, so much as by that higher state to which it will, in all probability, ultimately arrive. There can be no doubt, that the extinction of its present form of government will be followed by the incorporation of Paraguay with the Confederation of Rio de la Plata—a measure which it is invited to adopt, not less by ancient recollections, than by natural situation, and the course of its rivers. Cut off from Upper Peru by a vast desert, on the one hand, and, on the other, influenced by an old feeling of national hatred against Brazil, Paraguay must be indisposed to an alliance with either of those states. Once settled, it will go on prospering by freedom of trade, and the progress of civilization. Although its population bears no sort of proportion to the extent of its territory, still it contains more inhabitants for its size, than any other of

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the provinces which acknowledged formerly the authority of the Viceroy of Buenos Ayres. With a salubrious climate and fertile soil, Paraguay has also immense forests, which yield spontaneously two very valuable objects of exportation—the herb of Paraguay, and timber for building. When the population of South America shall experience that natural growth, which has been hitherto hindered by vicious institutions; and when its foreign connections shall be multiplied—then will this province attain fresh importance, becoming, in consequence of the convenience of its rivers, (the Parana, the Paraguay, and the Vermejo), the centre of commerce with Matogroso and Upper Peru. All these advantages will give to Paraguay a leading rank amongst the rising states of South America.—May they, in their turn, be taught from the experience of her misfortunes, to appreciate the fruits of Dictatorships and Presidencies for life!

The reader may be surprised to find in this narrative scarcely any thing to consist with the accounts which have been circulated respecting Paraguay. Doctor Francia was represented in the public journals of the Continent, as governing in the name of the Dowager Queen of Portugal. It was then said, that overtures were made by the Emperor Don Pedro to the Dictator, to effect the union of Paraguay with Brazil, whilst the latter was stated to be negotiating

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with the court of Madrid, and to have had his commissioners in that capital. Lastly, there appeared a gentleman of the name of Le Fort, Marquis of Guaranis, and Generalissimo of the army of Paraguay, in whose favour, it was said, Francia abdicated the government, transferring the reigns of power to the hands of General Zapidas, provisionally, until the return of Le Fort, and he himself retiring to Villa del Pilar. But, all of a sudden, Francia appears at the head of affairs; proclaims the independence of Paraguay, calling together and directing a congress from provinces, some of which belong to Upper Peru, and others to the Confederation of Rio de la Plata; and lastly, he is seen declaring war against Brazil.

It was somewhat surprising to find such frequent communications proceeding from a country which was notoriously sealed against all intercourse, especially when it was known that at Buenos Ayres, whose inhabitants were so peculiarly interested in those changes, no information of the sort had been even heard of, and that the English Journals were in the like state of profound ignorance. But, without entering into any further reasons, it is enough to state that the whole of this pretended news is a tissue of falsehood. Every one of the names made use of, is fabricated. There never were known, at Paraguay, such a person as Le Fort or a Marquis of Guaranis; still less a Bernardino Zapidas, or a Galicien

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Abendano, who was said to have been shot in the course of the insurrection: and with respect to the brother and brother-in-law of the Dictator, who had, according to the above account, retired with him to Villa del Pilar, the first is in a state of mental alienation, and the other is in chains. But it is a fact, that there was a person at Madrid, under the name of Le Fort, Marquis of Guaranis, a pretended agent of Doctor Francia. Is it not probable that this individual might have been the inventor of the elaborate imposition, for the purpose of gaining credit to his mission? I have been assured that he was, at first, well received by the government: but, the imposture being soon detected, he was obliged to break off his negotiations and seek safety in flight.

According to the latest letters which I received from Buenos Ayres, I have reason to think that Paraguay is still in the same condition as when we left it. The intercourse between those two countries is now more difficult than before; and even the vessel which brought us from Assumption, was not permitted to return to that city.

J. R. RENGGER, Doctor.

Aaran,
16*th March*, 1827.

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INTRODUCTION.

In order that the reader may better understand the events which I am about to relate, it may be useful to premise some general remarks on that part of South America which has been the theatre of those proceedings.

The ancient jurisdiction of the Viceroy of Buenos Ayres comprised nearly the whole of the territory which lies between the fifty-sixth degree of longitude, according to the meridian of Paris, and the base of the Andes—and between the sixteenth degree of south latitude, and the Straits of Magellan. It consisted of the large provinces of Upper Peru, Tucuman, Cuyo, Buenos Ayres, Banda Oriental, and Paraguay. With respect to Patagonia, the Pampas, and Great Chaco, which were also included in the above jurisdiction—those countries were inhabited

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by savage Indians only. Each of these provinces, with the exception of Buenos Ayres, where the Viceroy resided, had its affairs administered by a governor appointed by the latter. The province of Banda Oriental, which, by its vicinity to Paraguay, is worthy of particular notice, was, itself, subdivided into two territories, one of which, being situated on the left bank of the Uruguay, formed the country of Banda Oriental, properly so called. The other division received the name of Entre Rios, in consequence of its being comprised between the Uruguay and the Parana. In fact, Paraguay is a sort of peninsula or delta, formed by the course of the Parana and the Paraguay, from the point of their confluence to the twenty-fifth degree of south latitude. The treaty of St. Ildefonso, concluded between Spain and Portugal in 1777, it is true, fixed this boundary at four degrees more to the north. But the Portuguese contrived, by delays, to elude the execution of the treaty; and ever since they have maintained the portion of territory which they had originally usurped.

The province of Paraguay is now composed of Paraguay, properly so called,—the extent of which is calculated at ten thousand square leagues,—and, since the expulsion of the Jesuits, of the inconsiderable district that lies between the Parana and the Uruguay, where a part of the missions of this order had been established.

The population of Paraguay is small compared with

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its size. I cannot speak positively on this point, for the state of the country, and the jealous character of the Dictator, prevented me from making the necessary inquiries. But, as far as I have learned, the population does not appear to exceed two hundred thousand souls: it was not half that number in 1786, when a census was made: and, since that epoch, particularly since the revolution, Paraguay has never been in a condition favourable to the multiplication of its inhabitants. The government itself is ignorant upon the subject, and endeavours to give exaggerated accounts: but making the computation according to the number of effective men which it can count upon, we will find that the gross population does not exceed the amount above stated.

This population consists of whites, blacks, and a mixed race. The first class, comprising eight hundred Spaniards, the remainder being Creoles, forms the seven-tenths of the population. The Indians compose another tenth. The mixed race and the blacks make up the other two tenths. The Creoles, who are generally the descendants of the first conquerors of America from their marriages with Indian women, preserved for a long time the traits of the Indian character; but, in consequence of a cross of the Spanish race, all traces of that origin are effaced: they have even lost all recollection of it, and that so completely, as to seek to deprive the mongrel, in the first

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degree, of those civil rights, which they themselves enjoyed so long. As to the Indians,—though free, they are ineligible to any office, except over their own colony. The mixed races consist of mongrels, who are still recognised as such; of mulattos, properly so called; and of a mixture of Indian and black. In these latter classes the child follows the condition of the mother, and is free or servile according to that standard.

Although the men of colour are, in a great measure, free, they have been always supposed unfit for office: and, notwithstanding that some of them, since the revolution, have been admitted to office, the ancient Spanish prejudice is not the less strong against them. The blacks, whether free or slaves, are very few in Paraguay.

The revolution in Buenos Ayres, as in the rest of Spanish America, took the course of the revolution of the mother country. The intelligence of the abdication of Charles IV., in favour of his son, on the 19th February, 1808, reached Buenos Ayres in the beginning of August following. A few days afterwards—the 13th,—an emissary from Napoleon presented himself with dispatches from the new government of Spain. He was obliged to reimbark instantly by order of the Viceroy, Liniers; and on the 21st, the oath of allegiance to Ferdinand the VII. was taken. A tendency began to manifest itself in various quarters, to the formation of juntas after the model of that of Seville; but the Viceroy was able to

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suppress these symptoms every where, except at Monte Video. There the governor Elio distrusting, or affecting to distrust, Liniers, who was of French extraction favoured, this innovation. In 1809, the central junta of Seville deposed Liniers, and replaced him by Cisneros. The latter, having ascertained in 1809 that the whole of Spain, except Cadiz, was in the occupation of the French armies, became altogether confounded, and issued a proclamation on the 19th of May, in which, after describing the calamities of the mother country, he proposes a phantom of national representation. The municipality of Buenos Ayres, although consisting, for the most part, of Spaniards, immediately called a general assembly of the citizens of that place, which, on the 25th of May, deposed the Viceroy and substituted, in his stead, a junta of nine persons,—all Creoles. This junta, acting in the name of Ferdinand VII., resolved to have itself acknowledged throughout the jurisdiction of the late Viceroy: and then rose that struggle, between the Americans who favoured the junta, and the Spaniards who would support a Viceroy, which speedily resolved itself into a war of independence.

The result of this war has been, that, with the exception of Upper Peru, of Banda Oriental, and Paraguay, the territory over which the ancient Viceroy of Buenos Ayres presided, is now become the Confederation of the Rio de la Plata. The whole of Upper Peru is

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now a federal state under the title of Bolivia,—derived from the name of the Liberator: Banda Oriental, now the province of Cis-Platina, is the subject of contention between the Emperor Don Pedro and Buenos Ayres. In effect, Paraguay forms a very peculiar state, the history of which I am now about to trace.

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THE REIGN OF

DOCTOR FRANCIA,

IN

Paraguay.

FIRST PART.

CHAPTER I.

Belgrano marches upon Assumption—He is worsted—The Creoles are inspired with a taste for the Principles of Liberty which are spread amongst them, and Depose their Governor.

In the course of the month of October, 1810, the junta of Buenos Ayres, having resolved upon setting aside the governor of Paraguay, and vindicating their authority in that province, dispatched thither a thousand men, under the command of Manuel Belgrano. But the inhabitants were too well pleased with the mildness of their existing government to wish to change it, and they took up arms in its defence.

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They collected together an army of from five to six thousand men. The infantry, which was inconsiderable in amount, was composed chiefly of Spaniards; the cavalry consisted of Creoles. This body of men immediately put itself in motion; and miserably equipped, as they were, undisciplined, and without officers capable of leading them, they, nevertheless, proposed to give battle to the small army of Buenos Ayres, which had already advanced by the road of the Missions, as far as Paraguary, a place about fifteen leagues from Assumption, the capital of the province. The moment the hostile forces were about to engage, the governor of Paraguay, Don Bernardo de Velasco, clandestinely retired from the field of battle: not that he wanted courage, for of that quality he had already given undoubted proofs, during the heroic defence of Buenos Ayres against the English; but he was persuaded to the step by the wicked councils of those about him. Panic struck by this unexpected act, the infantry broke away; in an instant the whole body of six thousand men dispersed. But some of the troops of Buenos Ayres having set about plundering the village of Paraguary, the cavalry of Paraguay rallied and suddenly attacked them. From that

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moment success was secured to them—a part of the enemy's troops were taken: the rest, with General Belgrano at its head, capitulated and withdrew from the province.

But before, as well as after the completion of the capitulation, a number of conferences took place, during which Belgrano took the opportunity of cunningly infusing into the minds of the Creole officers of Paraguay, some notions of independence, which were far from being lost upon them: and now they began to talk familiarly with one another, upon matters, of which, but a few days before, they would have been shocked at the bare mention.

Their minds, however, were not sufficiently enlightened by education, to enable them to entertain any just opinions on the subject of liberty; but this short campaign, at all events, gave them a consciousness of their strength. Seeing that the number of the Spaniards amongst them was very limited and weak; impelled by the example of neighbouring states, and by the remembrance of former oppressions which they thirsted for an opportunity to resent; led also by the hope of enjoying situations of emolument, and, perhaps, governed likewise by that instinct of independence, which man constantly developes even in the

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deserts, amidst the scenes of inanimate nature, or amongst the beasts: influenced by all these causes, the principal Creoles of Paraguay were, more and more, detaching themselves from the government every day, until at last, in the course of the year 1811, they resolved to make common cause against it.

The conspiracy was badly organized: its existence began to transpire, when some of the officers who were engaged in it, courageously adopted the resolution of taking a decisive step before detection would have destroyed all their hopes. They proceeded to the governor's house, which they entered with pistols, and arrested that officer. That very morning two of the conspirators were united with him in the government, and they called a congress.

This congress deposed the governor—and replaced him by a junta, which, in imitation of that of Buenos Ayres, was to act in the name of Ferdinand VII.; but it proceeded more rapidly than that of the other provinces, and did not hesitate to proclaim the independence of Paraguay. The junta consisted of a president, two assessors, and a secretary, with a deliberative voice. Doctor Don Joseph Gaspard Rodriguez de Francia was appointed to the latter office.

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CHAP. II.

Origin, Education, and Character of Doctor Francia—His Promotion to Office—He becomes the Soul of the new Government.

THE history of the revolution of Paraguay being, in fact, nothing more than that of Doctor Francia himself, it may be necessary briefly to notice the former life and character of that personage. His father, a Frenchman by birth, went in his youth to Portugal; and from that kingdom he proceeded to Paraguay, where he formed a union with a Creole woman. It was generally believed in the latter country, that Francia was of Portuguese origin; but this he always denies, and prefers rather to have it thought that French blood only runs in his veins. He was first intended for the church, or, to use his own expression, he was condemned to the study of theology, which was formerly the only road to distinction; and he received the rudiments of his education at one of the indifferent schools which the monks kept at Assumption. He then repaired to the university of

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Cordova du Tucuman, which had been under the direction of the Franciscans since the expulsion of the Jesuits in 1767. He there studied with some success, and was admitted Doctor of Theology: but his application to the canon law having given him a taste for jurisprudence, he determined not to take the tonsure, and became an advocate.

It is probable, and his subsequent conduct confirms the supposition, that the scepticism with which he listened to the dogmas of the church, had something to do with his preference for the law. However, it was not uncommon, in his day, for young men in America, who were destined for the bar, to go through a course of theology, or for persons who embraced the ecclesiastical profession, to give some attention to jurisprudence. After returning to his own country from the university, Doctor Francia distinguished himself by a degree of courage and integrity which nothing could surmount. Never did he sully his function by undertaking an unjust cause: he readily defended the weak against the strong—the poor against the rich. He exacted large fees from those who could pay, and especially from those who were disposed to litigation; but he was extremely disinterested in dealing with those clients who

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were either in humble circumstances, or were reluctantly forced into the courts by the unjust conduct of others. He possessed a moderate patrimony—he was not ambitious of increasing it: the half of a town-house and a small farm in the country constituted the whole of his fortune, and gratified his wishes. Discovering once that he was the possessor of 800 piastres, he thought this sum was a great deal too much for a single person, and he spent it.

Unsocial, attached to study, and withal libidinous, he remained a bachelor. He had no family therefore, and, habitually resisting all tender impressions, he was totally unacquainted with the sentiment of friendship. It was not possible for him to obtain the slightest advantage from any intercourse with his ignorant countrymen, and he was totally destitute of literary resources: consequently, he scarcely possessed any knowledge of the world. Hence it was that he acquired that inflexibility of character which afterwards led him from one error to another. He had also the misfortune to be subject to fits of hypochondria, which sometimes degenerated into madness. His father was known to have been a man of very singular habits; his brother was a lunatic; and

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one of his sisters was out of her mind for several years.

Having attained the age of manhood, Doctor Francia was elected member of the *cabildo*, or council of Assumption, and afterwards succeeded to the office of alcaldi. A man of his character, it is easy to see, must have been independent, even in office: he, in fact, conducted himself in public on the same principle that governed him in private life. He sought neither to please the governor, nor the Spaniards; but resolved to protect Paraguay from the pretensions of the old country. He was as remarkable for his integrity as a judge, as he had been distinguished for the same quality as an advocate. This course of conduct won him the attachment and esteem of his countrymen.

I now resume the account of Paraguay.—The congress separated, after it had appointed the junta. The latter suffered the form of administration to exist, altering only the officers. Doctor Francia, who, by the superiority of his talents and the extent of his acquirements, secured to himself a distinguished rank amongst his countrymen, became the soul of this new government. As soon, then, as an adjustment had been made with Buenos Ayres, respecting the relations of

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commerce and the boundaries of the two states, Francia bent all his energies towards the establishment of a policy, which was inimical to a close alliance with that republic, the ambition of which he had reason to fear. It was upon this principle that he uniformly opposed the furnishing of a single man to the general defence of the South American cause against Spain, and the sending of a single deputy to any of the various assemblies which had been convoked during the war. He quickly shewed that it was his resolution to isolate the country; and it unfortunately happened that, whilst no one listened to him when he wished to restrain the excesses of the revolution, every body yielded to his councils, when the object of them was mischievous.

Meantime, in place of taking a part in public affairs, and endeavouring to give regularity and order to the administration of them, the two assessors, and the president, Don Fulgencio Yegros, a rich farmer, who knew nothing beyond horse-riding and the management of the net, exhausted their time in amusements, in parading about, and giving or receiving entertainments. They assumed military rank, and put on the costume of officers in the army. In imitation of the former governor,

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they were one time dressed as brigadiers; at another, as colonels of Spanish dragoons. They made away with every thing they could, to support the expenses which they incurred in the gratification of this inordinate love of show. In order to meet these calls, they frequently obliged state prisoners to purchase their liberty. Incapable themselves of knowing the value of national independence, or civil and political freedom, they allowed their agents to commit all sorts of arbitrary acts. But the country was the principal theatre of all their violence.

To imprison was, in their practice, to govern; to condemn or acquit, as hatred or interest dictated, was their mode of administering justice. They neither respected the old laws, nor would they supply new ones. To complete the disorders of the state, the greatest influence was allowed to women in the conduct of public affairs—and nothing was obtained, except through their intervention. Under the name of patriotism, all this violence was suffered to be perpetrated with impunity. The army, composed of the refuse of the country, arrogated the right of insulting the other inhabitants; and absolutely struck them when they presumed not to take off their hats to a soldier. The

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officers even went so far as to interfere in civil disputes, and to constitute themselves into judges; and being all relatives of those in office, they were allowed to commit the most revolting iniquities. Nor was the clergy behind hand. Divided into royalists and independents, the priests perverted the tribunal of confession into an instrument for the propagation of their respective politics. They quoted the Bible; and appealing to it as their authority, endeavoured, by incendiary sermons, to rouse the populace to every sort of excess. Molas, a priest, maintained, from the pulpit, that to kill a Spaniard was scarcely a venial sin: and some days afterwards, he disclosed two confessions.

Doctor Francia sought, in vain, to give a different direction to the course of the revolution. But the habits of men were now formed; and no one seemed disposed to give up those which he had followed. After repeated efforts to recall his countrymen to moderation, and despairing of success, Francia retired several times to the country. Upon each occasion, the public affairs altogether stood still; and his colleagues, full of alarm, made every concession, and promised every thing, in order to induce him to return. It was under these circumstances, that Francia distinguished

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himself by an act of humanity, if not of profound policy, which secured to him the good opinion of every honest man in Paraguay. A counter-revolution was concerted by the Spaniards and their adherents amongst the Creoles. The plot was discovered, as indeed easily it might; for, as has since been the case in another hemisphere, it was planned by the agents of the opposite party. All those engaged in it, were arrested; and without any other form, but on their simple moral conviction, the judges passed sentence of death upon them. Two of them were immediately shot, and their bodies hung on a gibbet: they were, perhaps, the least guilty parties, but they were certainly the poorest. When the news of these executions came to Dr. Francia, who was then at his country-house, he hastened to stop the further effusion of blood: he was well aware of the weakness of the Spaniards, to fear any thing from them; he therefore thought sufficient had been done for the sake of example.

The government then contented itself with compelling a part of the conspirators to pass under the gibbet, where the bodies of the two victims were suspended; and condemning others to chains for an indefinite term, which they might

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shorten by the payment of large sums to the state, or to the families of the chief officers. The most distinguished of the prisoners were collected together, and placed under the care of a sentinel, who was to keep them continually in sight; and they were enjoined, on pain of death, not to communicate with each other on any subject whatever—a state in which they continued for several months.

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CHAP. III.

The Junta is dissolved—The Government is made Consular —Francia first Consul.

A GOVERNMENT, in which misunderstanding was so prevalent, could not be of long duration. Even the junta acknowledged the necessity of a change; but, forgetting the crimes which had been perpetrated by the sufferance of a corrupt ministry, they declared that the functionaries whom they had employed deserved nothing but eulogy. They issued a decree for a new congress, and ordered the elections to be proceeded with immediately throughout the country. I must here notice an address from one of the inhabitants, which will serve to convey a notion of their general intelligence. A captain of militia at Yquamandiu, who had been distinguished for his revolutionary ardour, was anxious to expound to his countrymen what liberty meant; and, after having considered over and over again all the definitions which he had ever heard, he could find no better mode of explanation than to tell them, that it was *faith*, *hope*, and

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charity! The leaders of the revolution, who were scarcely better educated than this captain, were desirous of establishing a republic. But what was a republic? How was it governed? They knew not. Happily they had a copy of Rollin's Roman History, the very first good book which had ever been received into the country. They immediately determined to consult it. The institution of consuls took their fancy—a senate no longer met their approbation, probably because they knew not where to find senators.

However, the new congress assembled at Assumption in the year 1813. Never was there a body, upon which was devolved the duty of laying the foundation of a government, and furnishing ministers to a state, so inadequately constituted for that office. There were men in Paraguay, who, if they had not the advantage of education, at least, possessed strong natural talents. But it so happened that the choice of the inhabitants fell uniformly on the most incapable persons. These deputies spent all their time in taverns; and as they had no opinion of their own, respecting the affairs which they were called upon to consider, they were satisfied to be guided by others as to what they should say, and how they should vote.

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Doctor Francia, on account of his intelligence, was more appealed to than any person. He therefore enjoyed considerable influence. After several sittings, this congress, a motley group, to which the pencil of a Hogarth alone could do justice, superseded the existing government, appointing two consuls for the term of a year, Doctor Francia and Don Fulgencio Yegros, in whom was vested all power. Accustomed to the rule of a governor, whose will was law, the inhabitants of Paraguay never troubled their heads about the extent of power entrusted to the consuls; in fact, it was nothing better than a horde of Indians choosing their cacique. The consuls took their posts: Doctor Francia contrived, on this occasion, to intimate beforehand, the part in the government which he had determined upon assigning to his colleague. Two curule chairs were prepared for the consuls. They were covered with leather, and upon one was inscribed the name of Cæsar, and on the other that of Pompey. Francia eagerly took possession of the first, leaving the other to Yegros; and, in effect, the latter was treated precisely in the same way as to the ultimate distribution of power. He certainly had half the army under his command, but each consul was to exer-

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cise sovereign authority every four months; and Francia laid his plans so well, that the command, during the first and the last four months of the year, devolved upon him. The year being exhausted, the congress was again to assemble.

The administration now took a more regular course. A secretary of state was created. The municipal council was revived and became a tribunal of first instance, the members of which were charged with various judicial powers. The finances, which had been hitherto neglected, were now attended to —the army was better organized. Doctor Francia devoted his time and care to the discipline of the troops. In order to destroy altogether the political influence of the Spaniards, the consuls decreed in March, 1814, that that race was extinct so far as related to civil affairs, and they were prohibited from intermarrying with white women—an injunction with which, it is probable, that jealousy was not altogether unconnected.

Those relations with other countries which, up to this time, were looked upon as amicable, became now extremely ambiguous. The government of Buenos Ayres endeavoured to create a party in Paraguay, and to subject that state to its authority. Francia always rejected with firmness the

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proposals of that government. But his colleague was of a different way of thinking—and to his misfortune, Yegros was but too much disposed to listen to those overtures. Francia was as apprehensive of the dominion of Buenos Ayres as he was of that of the Spaniards; and, in fact, he had caused to be removed from the country several persons of distinction, who seemed to be disposed to an alliance with that republic.

Although several arbitrary acts were committed by these two magistrates, whose power was not so accurately defined, yet so much attention was paid to forms, that the consulate was regarded as a perfectly regular government. But Francia was not the person who could brook to divide power with any one, much less with an individual whom he despised and whose party he suspected.

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CHAP. IV.

Francia is made Dictator — Bad commencement of his Administration.

His ambition did not long remain concealed; for in 1814, the congress assembled to renew the government; in order to get rid of his adversary, he induced the assembly to confide the direction of the republic to one magistrate, in imitation of the neighbouring provinces, which had at their head either a governor, or a dictator. He proposed, after the example of the Romans, the dictator, as the only means of saving the republic from the evils which menaced it from abroad. Seeing, on the first day, that most votes were for Don Fulgencio Yegros, he had the address to prevent the ballot. Threatened with the same unfavourable result the second day, he made use of the same artifice. At last, on the third day, the deputies understood the motive for having adjourned the election; and tired of assisting at the congress, and of living at expense in the capital, they voted with a great majority for Doctor

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Francia. But he did not entirely owe his success to their being fatigued; the care he took to surround the church where these gentlemen were sitting, just at the most critical moment, with a guard of honour, composed of some hundreds of men devoted to him, brought him more than one vote. All these reasons combined to cause the nomination of Doctor Francia to the dictatorship for three years. There was scarcely (I do not say amongst the congress, but in all Paraguay) twenty persons who really knew what the word dictator meant; they attached no other meaning to it, but that of governor: the simple beings never supposed that they were to be so cruelly taken at their word. The congress also assigned to Francia the title of Excellency, with an allowance of 9000 piastres, of which sum he consented to accept only a third, observing, that the state stood more in need of money than he did—a mark of that disinterestedness which certainly never forsook him.

As soon as the troops, which were commanded by the consul Yegros, learned this decision, they mutinied and refused to submit to any other commander. Such was the ferment in the city, that an insurrection was very generally believed to be at hand. Happily, however, the com-

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manding officer of these men, Don Pedro Juan Caballero, although a personal enemy of the Dictator, had the generosity to sacrifice his private feelings to the peace of the country; and repairing to the barracks, he induced the soldiers, by whom he was very much beloved, to acquiesce in the determination of the congress—an act of liberality which, at a subsequent period, was very ill requited by Doctor Francia.

As soon as he found himself at the head of the government, he took up his residence in a mansion, which served formerly for the residence of the Spanish governors. His first care was the reformation of his own life: women and play were now absolutely renounced, and he exhibited the greatest austerity in his conduct. During the mornings he transacted business, he caused the superior officers, the city and country magistrates, to wait upon him to receive his instructions: he then gave private audiences to those who had any favour to ask, or any grievance to complain of: the master workmen, who were engaged in any public works, attended to take his instructions. He daily walked in the space appropriated to exercise; in the evening he devoted his leisure hours to reading, particularly

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the works of such French authors as could be procured for him, for he had learned the French language some time before the revolution. Polite literature, geography, and the mathematics, divided his time: the knowledge of medicine being very limited at Paraguay, Francia studied Tissot and Buchan, and prescribed for himself according to the directions of these writers. An old book upon arts and trade interested him very much, and furnished him with that information on these subjects, which, at a subsequent period, he applied in so extraordinary a manner. But his curiosity was chiefly directed to the military science, because he saw that the political existence of every country, but more especially of his own, must depend, in a great measure, upon the manner of organizing its military force. To this branch of his ministry, therefore, his attention was particularly applied. To procure a supply of *materiel* for his army, he established a monopoly of timber, an article which was in great request at Buenos Ayres, and he prohibited its exportation from the country, except by those who had transmitted to him arms and munitions of war. He afterwards extended this principle to every other article of commerce, by which means he obtained the

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necessary quantity of the materials which he wanted.

In the army itself, he began by removing, under various pretexts, all those officers who were obnoxious to him, or whose influence over the men appeared to him too extensive. These officers had caused a great deal of disturbance; but the true motive of their dismissal was, that they belonged to good families, and that the Dictator did not think it prudent to allow persons to hold rank in the army who were, at the same time, citizens. He supplied their places, not by more capable persons, but by men who, having nothing to lose, must look to him for their elevation above the humble condition in which they were placed. He then discharged such of the soldiers as he thought were of doubful sentiments towards him, and filled their places with fresh recruits. He next organized the different corps, exercised them every day, and subjected them to severe discipline; but that severity was limited to the interval during which the soldier was under arms or in barracks; after that, he was at liberty to do as he liked. The Dictator had the sole management of the troops, and they were of too much importance to him not to be the object of his

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greatest attention. His guard was composed of grenadiers, who also discharged the duty of gendarmes. It was by their agency that he dispatched orders to the suburbs of the city, that he sent for those to whom he desired to speak, and made arrests. They were the terror of the inhabitants; particularly after they had become spies to please the Dictator. The serjeant of the guards introduced the person who sought an audience of Doctor Francia; and it was necessary that the visitor should be in the good graces of the subaltern, in order to succeed in his application for an interview with the governor. But as these grenadiers imperfectly understood the Spanish language, they could not always convey precisely the orders which they received, or the answers that were returned by particular persons; and this circumstance produced a variety of mistakes, which were always sure to be punished as acts of disobedience.

In the civil departments, no important alterations took place in the beginning, except that Francia displaced all the independent officers, to make room for his own creatures. He exercised such an influence in the appointments to city offices, that the *cabildos* and alcaldis, who were for-

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merly the champions of popular rights, were now the most servile tools of despotism. He multiplied the number of circles into which Paraguay was divided, and gave the government of them to persons devoted to his interests; even the inferior agents of police were all his partizans. He next turned his attention to the state of religion; and here, at least, he began by a salutary reform. He abolished the inquisition, of which there existed a head commissary; and, as the bishop of the place was so shocked by the revolution, as to have his reason disordered, Francia directed that his vicar-general should perform all the duties of the episcopal office. Processions, as well as all-night service in the churches, were suppressed, as they were supposed to give facilities for suspicious meetings.

These changes were by no means sudden. The Dictator went on by degrees, as his authority increased in strength. In the beginning, even, he observed some regard to decorum. His orders were then less absolute, and he affected to justify them in the eyes of the public. He was affable in private, and received visits of courtesy from the different officers and persons of rank; nor did he think it, at that period, derogatory to his

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dignity to offer seats to his company, or compel them, as he afterwards did, to stand during their interview with him.

The three years of his dictatorship were now about to expire, and a new congress was to assemble in the year 1817. He took care, through the influence of the different superintendents over the circles, to have his own creatures returned to the assembly. He succeeded in having himself appointed dictator for life. Being once firmly established in the sovereignty, he threw off the mask, and soon gave his countrymen the opportunity of ascertaining the nature of the power which they had entrusted to him. Some caricatures, directed against his person, were posted at the corners of the streets. The authors of them gave out that they were the work of the Spaniards. Francia did not submit to the insult; he caused them to be apprehended, and, without any form of law, condemned them to chains. The sentence had little effect on the public, as it related to parties who were not much liked, and who were looked upon as turbulent. During the rule of the Spaniards, the government was always the judge in its own cause; the people were therefore accustomed to such a practice. Francia also caused

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Valta Vargas, a native of Paraguay, who was formerly a colonel in the Portuguese service, to be arrested, on suspicion of being engaged in a plot against him. The apprehension of Vargas led to that of other persons, but still no information followed. The circumstance, however, increased the distrust and severity of the Dictator. When he rode out on horseback, he was escorted by hussars: two went before and one followed him. They saw that every person on the way stopped in the most respectful way as they passed. At a subsequent time, Francia required his attendants to drive back on the highway all who presented themselves; and the blows of the flat part of the sabre, with which these directions were enforced, very soon disgusted the curious. Every person fled at the approach of the escort, and, at length, the Dictator was accustomed to ride through the streets as though a desert.

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CHAP. V.

Artigas—Character of his Troops—His Excesses—His Alliance with the Dictator—Tyranny of the latter—He lays the Foundation of Tevego.

It was in the course of this year, that the misunderstanding with general Don Jose Artigas commenced. This man, whose life has been only a tissue of horrors, was the great instrument of all the calamities which, for ten years, fell on the provinces of the Confederation of Rio-de-la-Plata. Descended from a good family in Monte Video, he passed his youth amidst smugglers and robbers. The Spanish government, wishing to suppress these marauders, appointed Artigas lieutenant of the chase; and in this capacity he now led the pursuit after his former comrades. During the revolution he was a patriot, and distinguished himself, in the war against the Spaniards, and at the siege of Monte Video. He was elected chief of Banda Oriental, and soon kindled the devouring flame of civil war. He made an attack on Buenos Ayres; he invaded Entre-Rios; excited a revolt in Santa-Fe; armed the savage Indians of Great

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Chaco, and laid waste parts of Paraguay by acts of unheard-of cruelty. His standard was the rallying point for the dregs of the human race. Brigands, assassins, pirates, robbers, deserters, all were equally acceptable to him. The march of his army was marked by slaughter and devastation. He provoked a war with the Brazilians, who only wanted the opportunity of entering into hostilities. In short, the results of the nine years' government, which he was permitted to exercise, were the total ruin of Banda Oriental, formerly a flourishing province, and the devastation of other provinces, with the general demoralization of the people in them all; not to speak of the remote consequences of this system, amongst which we are to reckon the present war between the South American republics and Brazil. It is fair to add, however, that had Artigas been left to himself, he would not have acted quite so ferociously; but he was surrounded by a set of villains, on whom he was obliged to place some reliance. The most infamous of these persons was a monk of mercy, named Monterosa, who acted as secretary and private counsellor to Artigas, and who stifled every sentiment of humanity in his bosom. And what shall be said of those who calmly looked on, and,

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from a distance, fomented these disorders, in order to the gratification of their base avarice? For it is a fact, that merchants in Buenos Ayres, as well as English, French, and North American merchants, did not hesitate to supply Artigas with the arms and ammunition, to enable him to carry on his work of devastation; thus laying the foundation of their own fortune, on the destruction of more than twenty thousand families!

But to return to Paraguay. A misunderstanding on the subject of commerce having arisen between the Dictator and Artigas, the latter made several attempts to enter into a compromise, but Francia always replied—"First, restore matters to their ancient footing, and then I will negociate." Mortified at this refusal, Artigas incited the Indians inhabiting the Missions of Entre-Rios, belonging to Paraguay, to revolt, and drove from these settlements the troops of the Dictator, who, in their retreat, set fire to all the habitations, that they might not afford a place of shelter to the enemy. In this manner was completed the destruction of fifteen of the most flourishing towns, belonging to the ancient missions of the Jesuits*.

* The following is the exact state of these missions. There were seven of them on the left bank of the Uruguay, and they

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He, at the same time, stopped and levied contributions on the trading vessels from Assumption; and suffered no vessels from Buenos Ayres to go up the river. Those which carried guns on board he immediately confiscated. The Dictator now suspended the granting of passports for leaving Paraguay, until he had ascertained that commerce was not likely to be any longer embarrassed; and this was ultimately the case, except that a few acts of annoyance were, afterwards, committed on the merchants. To hold any friendly relation with Artigas, the Dictator now saw, was inconsistent with the peace of the country, and his own security. He looked upon this man as a mere captain of banditti, and thought it beneath him to enter into a formal treaty with such a character. But, then, it was not Francia's policy to attack Artigas, because he acted as a very useful outpost, for his territory against Buenos Ayres. Artigas himself

formed part of Brazil; fifteen others were situated between the Uruguay and Parana. The latter have, in fact, ceased to exist: for on one side, the Brazilians, during the war with Artigas, on the other, the Indians, during their revolt, and then the army of the Dictator in their retreat, contributed to the ruin of these missions, which was finally completed by the troops of Artigas. There remains eight missions on the right bank of the Parana, consequently within Paraguay, properly so called.

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found it necessary to avoid breaking off all commercial intercourse with Paraguay: because, in the first place, he could not well do without it; and secondly, he looked to that country as a place of asylum in case of misfortune. His depredations were, therefore, confined to particular individuals; and war was never openly declared by either of the chiefs against the other.

The government of the Dictator was, in the meantime, gradually becoming more and more oppressive. All those whom he suspected of corresponding with Artigas, he contrived to send away, either banishing them from the country, or ordering them into the interior of the province. Amongst the former was a British merchant, who was compelled, at twenty-four hours' notice, to quit a very considerable establishment, without being allowed to say a word in his own justification. To utter an expression, in the least manner reflecting on the measures of government, or to fail in executing the orders, sometimes of a very laconic character, given by Doctor Francia, was punished with chains. Often, too, the same degree of severity was inflicted on the unfortunate person who, with the most innocent motives, might use a phrase which was capable of being construed by

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malice as a reflection on the Dictator. When a man was sent to a dungeon, it rarely happened, indeed, that he was made acquainted with the cause of his apprehension. This system of oppression was now aggravated by derision. Two Spanish monks, who thought, that on account of their calling, they would be regarded as inviolable in their persons, were made to endure some very gross insults. The Dictator caused them to be dressed in yellow jackets, and their heads to be shaved, in order, as he said, to take off the glory from their crowns; and then he cast them into a dungeon. Another Spaniard, Don Jose Carisimo, was treated in a manner still worse: the chains which he wore, absolutely pressed into his flesh; and when the Dictator was informed of the circumstance, he said, "If he wants other chains, he must get them made himself." And in fact, the wife of the prisoner had the sad office to perform, of bespeaking the chains with which her husband was to be loaded.

The vigilance of the Dictator was particularly directed against the wealthy class, without, at the same time, his neglecting to watch the lower orders. Such was his suspicious temper, that he even sought out victims from amongst the popu-

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lace. In order more effectually to separate those of this latter class on whom his suspicions fell, he founded a colony for them, at a place distant about 120 leagues above Assumption, on the left bank of the Paraguay, which he planted with mulattos and abandoned women. This new settlement, to which he gave the name of Tevego, is the most northern point of the country, except Fort Borbon. In chusing this spot, the Dictator had in view, amongst other objects, the creation of a power capable of restraining the savage tribe of the Mbayas, in their depredations on the cultivated lands.

But the motives which led Doctor Francia to oppress the members of the higher classes in Paraguay, were not always of a political kind. He was sometimes actuated by old feelings of personal resentment against them. Still, the dread of encountering another revolution, which might bring on such horrors as were suffered by the inhabitants of Banda Oriental and Entre Rios, made those of Paraguay resigned to the yoke of the Dictator. Up to that moment, it certainly could not be alleged against him, that he had caused innocent blood to be shed; and when his creatures would suggest to him to get rid at once

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of those who were obnoxious to him, Francia would say, "God gave them life, and it is for him to take it away—it is enough for me to hinder them from doing mischief." But the true cause of this moderation undoubtedly was, that at the time, he dared not go farther; for it will be seen, that he subsequently perpetrated excesses which present a hideous contrast to this expression, and which serve to confirm the assertion of one who was a long time acquainted with him, 'that there was nothing in all the French revolutions, which Francia so much admired as the walking guillotine.'

The internal tranquillity which Paraguay apparently enjoyed (and certainly the crimes of robbery and murder were very severely punished there), induced very large numbers of strangers, who were reduced to poverty, or were persecuted in their own provinces, to fly to that country for refuge: but the Dictator would not admit every person indiscriminately. For instance, when the Bishop of Upper Peru proposed to repair to Paraguay, the moment the vessel in which he sailed came into the river of that name, Doctor Francia dispatched an order to him, to return forthwith. On another occasion, a devout female, or, as

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such persons are called in that country, a *beata*, came to Assumption to establish a place for spiritual exercises, she was ordered away, as well as a Spanish capuchin, a few days after their arrival. In fine, of those strangers who were admitted into Paraguay, a considerable part was sent to Villa Real, or to Tevego.

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CHAP. VI.

Affairs of Corrientes—The Author arrives at Assumption—Has an audience of the Dictator—Admiration of the latter for Napoleon—His opinion of Europe—Execution of two Spaniards.

In the beginning of the year 1818, Paraguay became, in a particular manner, an asylum for the inhabitants of the city and neighbourhood of Corrientes. In consequence of a revolution, which took place thither in favour of Buenos Ayres, Artigas repaired there at the head of an army which was composed of the Indians, who formerly inhabited the missions of Entre Rios. He met with but slight resistance, and entered the city, when the greater part of the inhabitants fled. Upon this occasion the under officer commanding the Indians committed the most dreadful excesses. He was instigated to those acts by the Creoles of Artigas's party, but still more by an Irishman of the name Campell, a tanner by trade, who had been appointed commander of the naval force

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of Corrientes. The merchant vessels from Paraguay were first attacked, and plundered by the Indian officer: some were confiscated, and their crews ill treated and transferred on board ships of war. The Dictator, having received intelligence of these depredations, fitted out four or five gun-boats, and sent them to capture or destroy all the vessels they could find in the port of Corrientes. This flotilla appeared before the latter city on the 10th of October, 1818; but the attack being unskilfully directed, a few shots only were exchanged between the parties, when the assailant retired. These open hostilities had the effect of again suspending all commerce, and this state of things continued until the following April, when the Indians having evacuated Corrientes, the merchants of Buenos Ayres prevailed upon Artigas, no doubt by some considerable sacrifices, to exempt commerce from any further molestation.

It was in September, 1818, that we arrived at Corrientes, where we were forcibly detained for eight months. In May, 1819, in consequence of the intercourse being restored with Paraguay, we received permission to embark for that province. From this epoch begins the date of these events,

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of which we were eye witnesses—the materials for the preceding narrative having been derived from authentic sources of information, which I had an opportunity of consulting during my residence in Paraguay. On the 30th July, 1819, we disembarked at Assumption, and some days afterwards were presented to the Dictator. He is a man of middle stature, with regular features, and those fine black eyes which characterise the Creoles of South America. He has a most penetrating look, with a strong expression of distrust. On this occasion he wore the official costume, which consisted of a blue laced coat (the uniform of a Spanish general), waistcoat, breeches, stockings of white silk, and shoes with gold buckles. The Dictator was then sixty-two years of age, though he did not appear to be more than fifty. He asked me with a studied haughtiness of manner, several questions, by which he sought to embarrass me; but he soon after changed his tone. Having opened my portfolio to take out some papers which I had to present to him, he perceived a portrait of Buonaparte, which I, knowing his admiration for the original, had designedly placed there. He took it up, and examined it with great interest, when I told him whose like-

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ness it was. He then began conversing familiarly upon the affairs of Europe, with which he seemed to be better acquainted than I could have supposed. He asked me for news from Spain, for which country he expressed the most profound contempt. Louis the Eighteenth's charter was not to his taste; he admired much more the military government and conquests of Napoleon, whose downfall he deplored; but the principal subject on which he talked, was the monks. He reproached them with pride, depravity of manners, and all species of intrigue; and declaimed, particularly, against the tendency which the clergy in general have to throw off the authority of government. The better to make known his principles upon this point, he said, "If his holiness the Pope should come to Paraguay, I should make him merely my almoner *." Foreseeing the return of fanaticism and superstition in Europe, he insisted upon the necessity of crushing the monkish spirit in America, before

* The spirit of opposition to the Holy see animates the clergy as well as laymen of the ancient vice-royalty of Buenos Ayres: and some proposals are at this moment under consideration, for the purpose of detaching it from the Holy see. It is the Catholic religion, and not the Roman Catholic religion, which they desire to have.

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the country became infected with the new contagion. He could not, however, believe in the re-establishment of the Jesuits, which we informed him had been partly achieved; so pernicious did such an attempt appear to him. In speaking of the emancipation of Spanish America, he warmly declared his devotion to the cause, and his firm resolution to defend it against all attacks, no matter from what quarter. The ideas he expressed relative to the manner of governing these new states, as yet but little advanced in civilization, appeared to me sufficiently reasonable; but, unfortunately, he had himself put none of them in practice. He condescended to shew me his library; it was scanty, it is true, but it was almost the only one existing in Paraguay. I saw in it, together with the best Spanish authors, the works of Voltaire, Rousseau, Raynel, Rollin, La Place, &c., all of which he had procured since the revolution. He possessed, also, some mathematical instruments, globes, and maps; amongst others, the very best map of Paraguay that is to be found in the country. From the knowledge of the constellations, which he acquired by means of his celestial globe, and of the localities of his own territory by the map, it was imagined by the people, that he was

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an astrologer. But he himself never encouraged these notions; on the contrary, I can take upon me to say, that he endeavoured, as much as possible, to remove the prejudices with which the minds of his countrymen were imbued. He dismissed us with these words—"Do here whatever you please—profess the religion you wish—no one shall molest you; but take care not to meddle with the affairs of my government." We followed this advice all the time we were in Paraguay; and the Dictator, on his part, faithfully kept his promise. On coming away, I left the portrait of Buonaparte on his table, thinking he would have been glad to have it; he sent it after me by an officer, with an order to ask the price I set on it. As I did not wish to accept money for it, it being of little value, and as the Dictator had made it a rule never to receive a present, the miniature remained in my possession. This surprised me the more, as Doctor Francia had shewn me in his closet, a caricature of his hero, published at Nuremburg, and which he took for his portrait, until I explained to him the German inscription that was under the wretched engraving. It must have been this caricature that suggested to him the idea of completing his costume, by the addition of

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an enormous badge, in imitation of the clumsy star with which Buonaparte is decorated in that piece.

Some weeks after our arrival, the Dictator gave permission for several vessels to sail from Paraguay. But the experiment did not succeed: for commercial intercourse remained still suspended; and the ships were detained at Bajada, in Entre Rios, nor were they suffered to proceed to their destination, Buenos Ayres, without paying heavy contributions.

At this period, the Dictator made an addition to the troops of the line, and introduced some improvements into the mode of organizing the militia; whether with a view of meeting any hostile attempt from foreign powers, or of counteracting any attempt at rebellion in his own country, I have not been able to determine.

The new levy of six hundred men was quartered in the convent of St. Francis. This occurrence very much exasperated a Spaniard, who, along with being a fanatic, was now considerably excited, by the false report of a Russian expedition being on its way to South America. This person had the folly to say openly, that "the Franciscans, it is true, are extinct, but Francia's turn is yet to come." This language was reported to him: he

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sent for the Spaniard. "As to when I shall go, I really am ignorant; but this I know, that you shall go before me." And the unhappy man was shot next day, and his property confiscated; in consequence of which the widow and children, although Creoles, were reduced to beggary.

This was the beginning of the reign of terror in Paraguay. Doctor Francia so completely identified himself with the state, that he declared every man a traitor who presumed to oppose him, or even to cast reproach upon his conduct. In a very few days another Spaniard was put to death, for the very same offence, on account of which the other had forfeited his life. Upon both these occasions, the Dictator himself gave out the ball cartridges, so great was his distrust of those who had the care of the prisons and of the powder magazines. And, strange to say, so parsimonious was he of those materials, that he allowed no more than three men to each execution; so that in more instances than one, the unhappy victims were dispatched by the bayonet. Francia was a witness of those scenes of horror, for the executions took place always beneath his window, and frequently in his presence.

The punishment of the two Spaniards, spread

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consternation amongst those who were capable of any reflection. Up to that time the general impression was, that Francia aspired to supreme authority only, that he might become the General Monk of Paraguay, and surrender his power to king Ferdinand. But the severity exercised towards the Spaniards, was highly calculated to remove any such opinion. However, the notion was, in some degree, confirmed by the indulgence with which, as compared with the conduct of the governments of the neighbouring states, Francia treated the Spaniards; for in Paraguay they suffered infinitely less than the Creoles, because they lived in a more retired manner. But the imprudence of two individuals belonging to that caste revolted the Dictator, and made him implacable towards them. They probably manifested their determination to support the religious orders—the very institutions which Francia was resolved upon suppressing. The consequence was, that, looking to the influence which the monks, particularly the Spanish monks, would exercise on this occasion, he gave the latter their convent for a prison—he pronounced them incapable of hearing confessions, and prohibited their countrymen from holding the slightest communication with any of them.

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CHAP. VII.

Doctor Francia promotes Agriculture and Industry—The Means he employs—His Measures against the Savages.

In the beginning of October, the same year, swarms of locusts* passed from the right to the left bank of the Paraguay, extending themselves over a circumference of more than eighty leagues of country, where they deposited their eggs. The larvæ, which are hatched towards the end of November, and put themselves in motion, in countless troops, during the month of December, ravaged the most cultivated part of the land. A scarcity impended over the inhabitants—a visitation, which would have been particularly destructive this season, as the preceding harvest had been remarkably bad.

* This destructive insect is the acris of Lamarck. It visits Paraguay about every five or six years, and comes in clouds from the north or north-east. The period of their approach varies from the end of September to the beginning of November; and the north-west wind which sometimes prevails in that season, appears to be favourable to them. The waste is effected, not by the perfect insect, but by the new generation in the state of larvæ.

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To prevent this calamity, the Dictator resolved to compel the proprietors to sow, a second time, a considerable portion of the land which had been thus laid waste. The experiment was crowned with ample success. The blades of corn shot up with vigour, and the year 1820 was one of the most abundant that had been remembered in Paraguay; to the surprise of the old farmers, who, up to that time, never dreamt of such a thing as a double crop in the same year.

Thus, then, the absolute government of Francia produced at least one good result—the improvement of agriculture. Seeing the salutary effects of his measures thus far, he determined on extending them to the whole country; so that, ultimately, each farmer was under the necessity of employing himself in that particular branch of agriculture which the Dictator pointed out. By these regulations, he produced a complete revolution in the system of rural economy, which had been, up to that time, neglected so far, that the common necessaries, which would have almost grown spontaneously under the influence of the sun's rays, were imported from Buenos Ayres and the adjacent provinces. The Paraguasians never thought of extending their care to the cultivation

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of any article beyond the tobacco-leaf, the sugar-cane, and the yucca-root. The herb of Paraguay, which grows without any aid of art, in the vast forests of the north and east, engrossed all hands. Every abuse was remedied under the superintendence of the Dictator; and, in consequence of his directions to the farmers, the produce now became considerably augmented. The suspension of the intercourse, which had been hitherto uninterruptedly maintained with other countries, contributed also very much to produce this fortunate result, as it turned to the cultivation of the soil all that industry which used to be applied, either to navigation or to the collection of the *herb*.

The Paraguasians were accustomed to migrate for a short time every year. They were now forced to remain at home. Here, therefore, were so many hands gained. Rice, maize, the two sorts of yucca-root, were now cultivated upon a more extended scale, and with much greater diligence; and vegetables, which were hitherto unknown in Paraguay, began now to cover the plains. The cultivation of cotton, which was formerly wholly received from Corrientes, now proceeded in such a way, as that the home produce of that article entirely replaced the quantity which had

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been usually imported. Horses and horned cattle were encouraged in the same way. This branch of industry was attended to with so much spirit, that in place of receiving cattle from Entre-Rios as was before the practice, the farmers of Paraguay had now enough to enable them to export.

Another beneficial result of the interruption of foreign commerce was, the increase of manufacturing industry. Up to this time, the people of Paraguay made use of cottons only in the formation of a sort of light cloth fit for shirts. Necessity now compelled them to employ that article in the manufacture of all sorts of garments. The *ponchos*, a sort of cloak, together with horse cloths made of wool, which were annually imported from abroad, at a vast expense, were henceforth made at home. There used to be, before, no such thing as a dexterous workman in Paraguay. But the Dictator, by the number of the public works which he caused to be undertaken, gave a spring to industry: and as the projects which he conceived were above the capacity of the artizans whom he employed, he had recourse to intimidation, in order to awaken that natural ability with which every native of Paraguay is

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endowed. He caused a gibbet to be erected, and he threatened a poor shoemaker to hang him up, because he had not made some belts of the size he required. Thus it was that out of of blacksmiths, shoemakers, and masons, he created a race of whitesmiths, saddlers, and architects. Once he sentenced an unfortunate smith to hard labour, because he had improperly placed the *sight* of a cannon.

But industry, particularly that which was applied to the breed of cattle, was, from time to time, suspended by the Indian savages inhabiting Great Chaco *, who, crossing the Paraguary when the waters were low, spread themselves over the plains to the left of this river, and seized or destroyed every thing they met with in their incursions. The Dictator endeavoured, by means of occasional presents to

* The vast country stretching from the right bank of the Paraguary and Parana to the borders of Santa Fe, Tucuman, Upper Peru and Chiguitos, is called Great Chaco, and is inhabited by various tribes of savage Indians. The general name of Guaicurus is given to those that live between the 23°, 30′, and 31°, though forming a variety of communities differing from each other in language and manners, such as the Lenguas, the Tobas, the Macobis, and the Abipones. Those tribes which live between the 23° degree north, and the borders of the Portuguese provinces, are the Mbayas and the Guanas.

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their caciques, and by supporting commercial relations with them, to preserve peace with these savages. Thus Paraguay was protected from a number of attacks; but war was finally kindled, in 1819, with these Indians. The Dictator prohibited the purchase of the horses which they offered for sale at Assumption, because they had stolen them in Santa Fe and Cordova. Annoyed by this order, they assassinated ten soldiers and an officer, who had passed to the left bank of the river, opposite the capital. It was by a sudden blow like this, that these savages usually declared war. The Dictator instantly dispatched some hundreds of men in pursuit of this horde; but they were not to be easily taken in these immense deserts, although their fires were perfectly visible every night, and their scouts were sometimes in view. They profited by the security which the inhabitants of the banks of the Paraguary now fancied they had gained, and dividing themselves into various bodies, they crossed the river, and attacked several houses. On another side, the valiant Mbayas, inhabiting the rich country, which extends more than fifty leagues to the north of Villa Real, continued, by their incursions, to force back the population into the interior of the

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country. Several expeditions against them had proved unsuccessful, and some even unfortunate. The garrisons of the most important places of strength, were composed of troops of the line; the others were occupied by militia. A party of these soldiers crossed the Paraguary night and day in boats, particularly during the season when the waters were low, and watched the passage. At Aquidabanigi, where the enemy was most formidable, in consequence of the fire-arms, with which the Portuguese furnished him for stolen cattle, a cannon-shot was the signal by which the approach of the invaders was announced to the inhabitants of the valley, and also for the assembling of the militia under their officers. These energetic measures contributed much more than any attempt, by means of missions, to keep the Indians in subjection, and preserve tranquillity on the frontiers of Paraguay. It is true these savages are now treated as ferocious beasts: war without quarter is made on them: they are relentlessly killed, whether they appear as friends or enemies. The Dictator had the cruelty, even, to cause eight of them to be shot, who had been captured and sent to the capital. In order the more effectually to reduce the Mbayas, he sent 400 men to a dis-

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tance of sixty leagues north-east of Villa Real, with orders to destroy a forest of cocoa-trees, which afforded shelter and the means of subsistence to the savages during several months in the year. He also caused one of their hordes, which had been for two or three years previously established near the capital, to be removed, part to that city and part to the missions; being desirous of fixing the Indians in the country, and of confounding them, by crossing the two races, with the white population*.

* Judging, by the character of the savage Indians, and from the state of the provinces which formed the ancient vice-royalty of Buenos Ayres, the measures adopted by Francia, with the exception of his cruelties, appear to be best calculated to restrain these people. There is too little civilization, strength, and union in these new republics, to allow the hope that the savages can be raised from their abject state by more wholesome methods. The Indian had a decided aversion for all species of subjection, and an irresistible love of a wandering life. The only practicable method of reclaiming them, is to repress their incursions and to keep them isolated. Hunger, and the wars which these hordes mutually make against one another, will force them to demand a *reduccia*; for such is the name given to those establishments which are granted to the Indians on the frontier, when they are *reduced* to a state to require them. They might be dispersed in the interior amongst the Creoles, where the race, which does not appear to me susceptible of any great degree of civilization, would soon be lost in an amalgamation with the whites. It has been attempted to form *reducciones* on the frontiers, and the government has given all possible encouragement to the formation of

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these establishments, by sending missionaries there, to convert the Indians to Christianity; but these attempts have been attended with but little success: as soon as the Neophytes found that they were obliged to work, they collected together as many animals as they could steal from the neighbouring farms, and went back to the deserts. Those who attempted to civilise the savage, by simply teaching him Christianity, seem not to have reflected, how necessary it was that his mind should be cultivated to some extent before he could comprehend what religion was—particularly a religion founded on dogmas. The Jesuits formed their establishments of conquered and fallen Indians belonging to the Gueranis; a race, of which a portion, still occupying the mountains south of Paraguay, is so tame that it never does any injury. In forming a new town, the Jesuits usually took the inhabitants of some ancient place for the nucleus of the population; and those who subsequently came to reside at these establishments were attracted there, not so much by the benefits of Christianity, as by the prospect of finding an asylum against the oppressions of the Spaniards, and particularly against the cruelties of the Portuguese, by whom they were chased with hounds, for the purpose of being sent to perish in the mines. Stratagem as well as force was resorted to by the Jesuits, to multiply the number of the Neophytes.

These missions have afforded, undoubtedly, protection to the Indians; but instead of preparing them for Christianity, by first civilising them, the Jesuits only made them automata, whom they made use of for their own profit. Under their treatment, the Indians have continued the same; for I do not think that the name of religion should be applied to the mummeries which have been given to them as religious ceremonies, or the title of civilization bestowed on the strict system to which they have been kept. The descendants of those Neophytes, have scarcely any advantage over the savage Indians; and yet, surely, one hundred and fifty years of continued instruction, ought to have left some traces behind it.

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The Jesuits attempt, in their writings, to give a different account of those missions; and lay authors, adopting that account, have represented them as forming an enchanting country. But when we see how strangely the fathers, in their descriptions of Paraguay, have misrepresented that which is daily before our eyes, we cannot credit them when they speak of themselves.

On the subject of the Indians and the Jesuits, I entirely agree with Don Felix de Azara, whose work on Paraguay is distinguished by the fidelity and acuteness of its author; reserving myself for another opportunity, of unfolding the results of my own researches into the state of the Jesuits' missions.

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CHAP. VIII.

Conspiracy against Francia—Manner in which it was detected—Measures of the Dictator, in consequence of that Event.

WHILST the Dictator was thus employed in securing the frontiers, a cloud was gathering over his head. The leading authors of the late revolution, together with those who had been employed in the time of the junta and consulship, now saw that they must not expect to return to office. Some of them were even in chains. All these persons were naturally the enemies of Francia. His appointment for life excited their resentment to the utmost pitch. The arrival of an emissary from Buenos Ayres was to them a happy event, and they determined to take advantage of it. This individual was Valta-Vargas, who was sent by the Director Puyrredon, to try and effect a revolution in favour of Buenos Ayres, by availing himself of the discontent which was known to prevail amongst the principal families of Paraguay. The

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imprudence of the envoy very soon excited suspicion: and he was, as has been related already, arrested; but his apprehension was productive of no positive information respecting the conspiracy. The conspirators, finding that they were still undiscovered, pursued their plans. There can be no doubt, but men were amongst them who were directed by a sentiment of patriotism; but the majority was instigated by wounded pride, by hatred, and personal interests. After having, contrary to all probability, succeeded in prolonging their secret deliberations for two years, they determined on practical measures; and fixed on Good Friday, 1820, as the day for the breaking out of the revolt. Unfortunately for them, one of the conspirators having gone to confession, to a Franciscan, during the Lent, told every thing to the friar. The latter laid an injunction on his penitent, to go directly to the Dictator, and to reveal the plot to him. The order was obeyed, and Francia caused to be apprehended every person pointed out to him: amongst others, his old colleague, Don Fulgencio Yegros, was arrested. Meanwhile, he doubled the posts of the capital, patrolled the streets himself with his attendants several nights, and gave orders to the

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various officers in the country, to exercise the strictest vigilance in their several stations.

This conspiracy rendered Francia much more difficult of access. He now saw in those who approached him, only conspirators and traitors. Woe to him who happened to be in the Dictator's way; imprisonment or hard labour was sure to be his portion. Doctor Francia inflicted punishment for every thing, for the slightest fault as well as the heaviest crime. His horse was once frightened at the sight of an old barrel which stood before a door: he had the owner of the house arrested, before which the obnoxious barrel was placed. He was told by an informer, that the conspirators intended to assassinate him when he went out to take his daily exercise; and conceiving that the narrow and winding streets, and in particular the orange trees, by which they were shaded, afforded facilities for such an attempt, he proposed to demolish them. The greater part of the trees were cut down, without the least regard to their use in giving shelter against the burning sands of the capital: the facades of houses, and several houses themselves, were demolished for the purpose of building new streets, or of widening the old ones. But he very soon

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saw that in order to proceed regularly, he must adopt some plan or another: and as he had issued no decree, he disavowed the officer by whom these demolitions were immediately effected, and compelled the proprietors to rebuild, at their proper cost, the facades which they had been compelled to pull down. He also caused a habitation to be raised within a barrack outside the town, which he occupied occasionally, in order that no one might know where he spent his nights. However, to vary, as it were, the apprehensions with which he was tormented, he sometimes went out alone, and visited those parts of the city where he had never been accustomed to go. With respect to the conspirators, he contented himself with sending them to prison, and confiscating their property: but he razed the house where they held their sittings.

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CHAP. IX.

Artigas, overcome by one of his own Lieutenants, takes refuge in Paraguay—Treatment of him by Francia—Ramirez endeavours to stir up the Country—Execution of the Conspirators.

VERY nearly about the time that these things were going on in Paraguay, one of the lieutenants of Artigas, named Ramirez, in the province of Entre Rios, marched against his superior, at the head of eight hundred of the bravest cavalry. After several engagements, he succeeded in forcing Artigas to retire, with the wreck of his army, into the ruined missions; and seized the reins of power.

Followed by a thousand men, Artigas presented himself, in September, 1820, on the left bank of the Parana, exactly opposite the mission of Ytapua, then one of the posts of Paraguay, and required of the Dictator an asylum for himself and his troop. The latter immediately sent a squadron of cavalry, with orders to make the fugitives pass the river, adopting at the same time the precaution of

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admitting only a certain number at once. Artigas first crossed, and was followed by a party of his men; another body, consisting of Indians, who had formerly inhabited the missions, now in ruins, preferred retiring to their old residence, there to form themselves into a new establishment. The general was conducted by an escort to the capital, whilst his companions in arms were scattered through the country. Many of those persons, having lost all disposition to labour, chose to adhere to their present mode of life, plunder; but they were soon either apprehended or shot. After having been some days in a cell of the Convent of Mercy, where the Dictator had placed him, Artigas was sent, without being able to obtain an audience, notwithstanding his pressing solicitations, to the village of Curuguaty, which is eighty-five leagues north-east of Assumption. From that place it was impossible for him to escape, but by a desert on the Portuguese side, of which there was very little danger that he would avail himself, after the excesses he had committed against that nation. The Dictator assigned him a house and lands, with thirty-two piastres a month, his pay formerly as lieutenant of Chasseurs, and ordered the governor of the circle to furnish him,

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besides, with whatever accommodations he required, and to treat him with great respect. It appears that since that time, Artigas wished to expiate, at least in part, the course of iniquity in which he had so long wallowed. At the age of sixty he cultivated his farm with his own hands, and became the father of the poor of Curuguaty: he distributed the greater part of the produce amongst them, gave up all his pay in relieving them, and afforded all the assistance in his power to those of them who laboured under sickness. The Dictator, on his part, in thus admitting into Paraguay one of his greatest enemies, and in securing to him an honourable existence, was anxious, as he himself expressed it, to shew his regard for the obligations of hospitality, so well understood amongst the Paraguasians.

In this manner terminated the political career of Artigas. The new ruler of Entre Rios, Ramirez, sent to the Dictator several times, officers with friendly overtures. With a view of gaining him over, he placed at his disposal Campell the Irishman, as well as his Secretary Bedoya, a native of Paraguay, both of whom had, at a former time, under Artigas, caused a great deal of injury to be done to the commerce of Paraguay:

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but the Dictator put the officers in chains, and contented himself with placing the two prisoners under the care of the commander of Villa del Piller, near the mouth of the Paraguary. Ramirez being informed by merchants of the treatment of his emissaries, resolved to attack the Dictator. There is no doubt but that a sudden invasion at the time would have been crowned with success: but unacquainted as he was with the state of the frontiers, this General exhausted a good part of the year in concentrating his forces at Corrientes, where he opened a correspondence with the malcontents of the interior, by means of some of the inhabitants of Paraguay who had returned home. The Dictator, as soon as he was apprised of the preparations begun by Ramirez, resolved to give no more passports for going out of Paraguay, and assembled an army of near 2,000 men at Villa del Pillar, with which he proposed to guard the passes of the Parana. Armed boats were ordered to sail as far as Corrientes, to reconnoitre the movements of the enemy. The latter had now his attention drawn to Buenos Ayres, so that the war proceeded no farther than these demonstrations. A letter of Ramirez, secretly addressed to Fulgencio Yegros, of whose

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apprehension he was ignorant, fell into the hands of Francia, by some awkwardness of the person who was to deliver it. The letter was shewn by him to no one; but judging by his subsequent actions, it would appear that it contained proposals for a revolt. He saw now that he was about to be attacked from without; and he resolved, in order to crush any movement at home, to rid himself of the conspirators who were still in chains. He began by ordering the bearer of the letter to be shot, and the prisoners to be examined; and when he could extract nothing material from the latter, he directed that they should be put to the torture. Thus he discovered other accomplices, who, in their turn, denounced others. The conspirators were aware of the intention to arrest them; they had sufficient time to prevent the fulfilment of it, either by a prompt execution of their plan, or by escaping to the savage Indians of Great Chaco, whom they had certainly much less reason to fear than they had to be afraid of Francia. However, they remained perfectly inactive, and allowed themselves to be apprehended without the least resistance. This absence of energy, amongst men who were in general remarkable for their courage, proceeded

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from the expectation they entertained of every moment hearing of an invasion by Ramirez.

The examination to which the prisoners were subjected, took place in this manner:—The Dictator gave a set of written questions each day to his first secretary. The latter put them to the prisoner in the presence of an officer and register, and brought back the answers to the Dictator, who, when they were insufficient, sent the prisoner to the "Chamber of Truth," the name of the place where the torture was applied. There he received from one to two hundred blows of a leather whip on the back, when the examination recommenced. This operation was repeated sometimes every two or three days, on the same individual, until his answers were such as to satisfy the Dictator. The prisoner then signed the examination. Some of these unfortunate persons received thus, at different times, as many as five hundred lashes, and yet no confession could be wrung from them; and a servant, from whom they thought of extorting some information relative to his master, fell a victim to this severity sooner than utter a word.

The examination being over, they proceeded next to execution, when the accused were shot by four or eight at a time. Though overwhelmed by

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the sufferings which they had endured, they all died with the greatest fortitude, and some with the cries of "Long live the Country!" on their lips. A young man of the name of Montiel, who was not mortally wounded by the shot he received, rose up to give orders for a fresh discharge. Another individual, named Juan Pedro Caballero, took the resolution of exempting himself from the torture and execution, by an act of suicide. The following words, traced in charcoal, were found on the walls of his dungeon: "I know that suicide is contrary to the law of God and of man; but the tyrant of my country shall not strengthen himself with my blood." This being concluded, the bodies remained, stretched in the attitude in which death had left them, before the habitation of the Dictator. It was not until evening that the relations were allowed to carry away and hide the corpses, (in which, from the excessive heat of the climate, putrefaction had already begun), from the voracity of the birds of prey that had been seen hovering over them throughout the day.

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CHAP. X.

More Executions—Their mischievous Effect on the national Character—Distrust and Terror—Persecution of the Spaniards.

THESE scenes were repeated almost every two months, up to the middle of the year 1822, when forty victims perished in this manner. It should be mentioned, that the Dictator spared the lives of several individuals who were acquainted with the plot, although they took no active part in it; but he suffered them to languish in the state prisons, where they might be said to have died a daily death. He treated in the same way the wife of one of the conspirators, who, upon the arrest of her husband, took the resolution of putting together the broken threads of the conspiracy. Though detected, and put in irons, she still repeated every day, "Had I a thousand lives to lose, I would risk them all to destroy this monster."

The result of the examination which the conspirators had undergone, was never made public:

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nothing, therefore, is known of their designs, except what the Dictator, and the three persons entrusted with the management of it, were pleased to give. The latter never alluded to the subject, except with extreme circumspection. But it is pretty certain, that the conspirators meditated the design of dispatching Francia and his head officers, and seizing the reins of government. The Dictator stated, at the time of the first arrests, that not only himself, but every person in office, was to be destroyed; and that the conspirators, after having possessed themselves of the effects of their victims, were to deliver up the country to Buenos Ayres. But these accusations are altogether incredible; for the leaders of the enterprize, it was well known, were men of integrity, and enjoyed considerable property; and with respect to the other conspirators, they were capable, no doubt, of committing any excess; but, it is probable, they would have sought a share in the government, rather than a change of masters. However, the reports thus put in circulation by the Dictator had their effect. Those who held office, from the highest to the lowest, felt themselves happy at escaping such great dangers, and naturally became more devoted to the individual

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who had been the instrument of their deliverance. The people also, whose order supplied all these retainers, at once saw that, if a revolution were effected in favour of the upper ranks, they must necessarily lose their eligibility to place, took part with the Dictator. When we add to these causes, the intimidation which his severity had produced on the public, we shall no longer wonder that Francia should have been able to find so great a number of satellites, who were ready to execute his orders. In this instance, as in all others, the failure of a hostile attack only served to increase the power of him against whom it was directed. From this time forward the Dictator had no other enmity to fear than that which came from without.

Another effect of these executions was, to change the national character in one of its most honourable points. The Paraguasians were distinguished, above every other people of South America, by a spirit of harmony, which made them, as it were, one family. Now, unfortunately, brother was seen to denounce brother—fathers to accuse their children. Doubtless they were driven to this by torture ; but suspicion was general, and penetrated into the bosom of families.

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No one dared to become the depositary of his neighbour's secret, lest he should be deemed an accomplice. The latter must therefore completely isolate himself. When friends met, they coldly saluted each other, but did not converse: no more parties—the women even gave up their privilege of speech—the guitar, the inseparable companion of every inhabitant of Paraguay, was mute. The result of this state of things was, that despondency and a sort of stupor seized all ranks, and made each person indifferent to his own or his neighbour's misfortunes.

However, we did not so much participate in those feelings, until one morning all of a sudden a friend of ours, Don Andrez Gomez, with whom we lived for two years under the same roof, was apprehended. We were all at breakfast when a grenadier of the Dictator's guard entered the apartment and took him into custody. Since that moment he has been kept in chains, without any clue whatever being given to the motives of his arrest. He was a merchant who was profiting by the licences which the Dictator had granted him, and who, from motives of gratitude as well as of interest, would have been the last person to conspire against Francia. It may

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have so happened that, during an excursion to Buenos Ayres, something may have fallen from him, which being reported to the Dictator, had given him offence.

When an individual was once placed in this degrading situation, all his family were treated as if they had been the objects of an anathema: no one could visit them without becoming instantly a suspected person. Whoever endeavoured to hold communication with any state prisoner was instantly arrested, as was the case with several women who had interchanged a few words with their husbands through a grate.

The other towns, indeed the whole country as well as the capital, were placed under the same rigid discipline. The governor and alcaldes committed the greatest enormities, under the pretext of taking measures for the general security. Their whole employment consisted in fining, imprisoning, or flogging their countrymen; and this iniquitous course they pursued with the more rigour, as they were aware that the Dictator would listen to no complaint. It is easy to believe that under a system like this there was plenty of informers, some taking up the office from subserviency, others for

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revenge. For instance, a woman out of jealousy accused her lover of having uttered offensive expressions against the Dictator, who ordered the unfortunate man to receive a hundred blows. But the latter was so averse to this disgraceful punishment, that he begged to be shot rather than undergo it, and his application was immediately complied with. The Dictator, however, was never known to reward either a spy or informer: on the contrary, he so justly appreciated their character, that he dismissed some officers who had acted for him in that capacity, as soon as he had no further use of their services.

Lest any bad impression should arise in the general opinion from the circumstance that punishment had been hitherto confined to the Creoles, as in fact all the conspirators consisted of persons of that caste, Francia determined to direct a blow at the Spaniards. Thus under the pretence of finding fault with some masonwork, which one of them had been entrusted to erect, the Dictator had him shot in June, 1821. Two days after this execution he issued an order, calling on all the Spaniards inhabiting the city and places within a league of it, to assemble in

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three hours at the square in front of the government house. This order contained numerous complaints against the Spaniards; they were accused, amongst other things, of obstructing the proceedings of government. Nothing could be more unfounded than this aspersion, for the Spaniards applied themselves to business and nothing else, and lived in the most reserved manner, aware, that as Spaniards, they would be watched with particular vigilance. As soon as they were collected in the square, to the number of upwards of three hundred, they were led to prison, where they were crowded together, in fifties, in rooms which had but one general door and one window, for all of them. These were closed at night. By day, they were allowed to walk in a small yard. Doubtless, it was on account of this indulgence, that the Dictator considered the Spaniards as having been very well treated, insomuch, that he would not suffer them to be called prisoners, but recluses. The late governor of Paraguay, a respectable old man, was of this number: he fell a victim to this severity, after a short illness, during which he found it impossible to procure medical assistance. His government had been distinguished by its justice; and,

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after his fall, he still preserved the respect of all ranks. Contrary to the practice of Spanish governors, he was so disinterested in his office, that after he had been deposed, he was indebted for subsistence to a fund which was collected for him by his countrymen every month. In process of time, some of the prisoners, such as were of the humblest condition, were enlarged; but they were compelled to withdraw, some four leagues, others ten leagues, distance from the capital. The more distinguished persons remained in prison nearly nineteen months. In December, 1822, they recovered their liberty; but even then, it was upon the hard condition of paying, in three days, a fine of 150,000 piastres. The pretext pleaded by the Dictator for this unjust levy, was the necessity he was under of fitting out an armament to protect the commercial intercourse which he was about to resume with the southern provinces: he promised those who were the objects of his extortions, a proportion of the licenses to trade, which up to that time, they had not enjoyed. But this was all fraud, commerce stood in need of no protection; because, in the course of that year, the disorders which existed in Entre Rios, Santa Fe, and Buenos Ayres, had com-

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pletely ceased, and all these states maintained the best understanding with each other. In fact, the Dictator fitted out no armament; nor did he even open the port of Assumption. His policy in having recourse to this fiscal measure, was to ruin the Spanish families which still formed the leading class, if not of the country, at least of the capital. The money was exacted upon such a rigorous principle, that one individual having died, his contingent was levied on his orphans, although they were Creoles. The object of the Dictator was almost completely attained; for the greater part of the Spaniards, unable to attend to their affairs for a long time, and consequently not being in a condition to meet the demands of the Dictator, were reduced to absolute poverty. Three of them were kept in prison for default of payment: several others were enabled to make up their proportion only through the kindness of some generous Creole merchants, who came forward in their behalf. The Paraguasians generally buried in oblivion their national antipathy on this occasion; and in compassion for the misfortunes of their enemies, liberally assisted them, forgetful of the consequences which their generosity might

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draw upon them. In the midst of so many atrocities, it was quite a relief to see the poor banished creatures welcomed wherever they went; fed, and clothed, and even supplied with the means of employing their industry by the Creoles.

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CHAP. XI.

The Dictator's Treatment of Strangers—M. Bonpland—The Interference that was made in his Favour, only aggravates the evils of his Situation.

THE persecution of the Spaniards was general throughout the South American states, but nowhere was it accompanied by so much injustice as in Paraguay. There they were not of the same description as the Spaniards elsewhere, namely, men taken from the lowest walks of life, and sent from the mother country, like a privileged race, to enjoy good places and subsist on extortion. Paraguay was too poor for that. In that country they applied themselves to business, without having the slightest facility, which was not given to every body else. The fortunes which they possessed were acquired in the most legitimate manner; and, as they intermarried with Creoles, their property remained in the country. In this way the rich families in Paraguay were founded, for the natives themselves are too indolent to accumulate wealth by their industry. The sole advantage which the Spaniards enjoyed over the other inha-

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bitants, consisted in a preference which was given to them in the appointment of cabildos and other officers, to which, however, the Creoles were not ineligible. It was to be expected then, that, at the beginning of the revolution, the Spaniards would have endeavoured to keep the reins of government in their hands; but having signally failed in that attempt, they fully acquiesced in the new order of things. How unjust was it then, to revenge on these innocent persons the three centuries of wrongs which Spain had inflicted on her colonies!

During the progress of the cruel and unrelenting tyranny of Francia, foreigners were the only persons to whom he appeared desirous of extending the slightest indulgence. At the time of our arrival in Paraguay, we found only a few of that class; but a considerable number came afterwards, consisting of English, French, Italian, in all about forty persons. Except an English physician, Doctor Parlet, Mr. Longchamp and myself, all the strangers at Assumption were merchants, attracted there by the advantages of the licenses which offered, at that time, unbounded profits. However, like ourselves, they were all disappointed, and fell into the net; for they were pre-

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vented from departing by the closing of the port. In daily expectation of seeing the communications with other countries restored, they forbore to traffic with the interior, and lived upon the means which they had brought with them. Some of these persons, who had been originally mechanics, had recourse to their respective trades for subsistence, and, experiencing no molestation from either Francia or any of the authorities, they were generally looked upon as protected persons. For myself I can only say, that I have every reason to be grateful for the reception which I met with in my excursions to the interior, from the various authorities. I had, it is true, been admitted to several private audiences by the Dictator—a circumstance which was looked upon as a mark of very high favour. Still it was necessary to be very circumspect, particularly for those who mixed with men of all ranks and parties indiscriminately. Very fortunately for us, we were in a condition that enabled us to gain the good will of the inhabitants. However, the arrest of Mr. Bonpland, which took place towards the close of 1821, could not but alarm every foreigner, although the Dictator endeavoured to remove our apprehensions. On the 28th December, I returned from a journey

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to Villa Real, and, next morning, presented myself at the government house, according to custom, to deliver my passport to the Dictator. I was introduced to him in the gallery, where he usually gave audience. After some questions, he informed me that Mr. Bonpland was his prisoner some days. "Mr. Bonpland," said he, "formed an establishment, for the preparation of the herb of Paraguay, with the Indians, who, after Artigas's submission, settled themselves in the ruined missions of Entre Rios. He wanted to establish relations with me, and came twice for the purpose to the left bank of the Parana, opposite Ytapua, with dispatches from the Indian chief, written in his own hand. Now I could not allow the herb to be prepared in those countries, which, besides, belong to us—it would injure the commerce of Paraguay; and I was under the necessity of sending four hundred men there, who destroyed the establishment, and brought away several prisoners, among whom was Mr. Bonpland." I endeavoured to excuse the celebrated traveller, but he immediately imposed silence on me, adding, in an angry tone, "It is not for attempting to prepare the herb upon my territory that I feel offended with him; it is because he has made an alliance with

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my enemies, the Indians, whom you yourself, during your captivity amongst them, must have well known. In short, I found amongst Mr. Bonpland's papers two letters, one from Ramirez, the other from his lieutenant, Garcia, who commands at Baxada, both corroborating my suspicions, that this establishment was formed for no other purpose than to facilitate the invasion of Paraguay."

From what I have since learned, I perceive that the Dictator told me only half the truth—for he suppressed the fact, that his soldiers had massacred a party of Indians—that Mr. Bonpland, without the least provocation, received a blow of a sabre from one of them—that his property was plundered—and that without any pity for his sufferings, they conducted him with irons on his feet to Santa Maria, the chief place of the missions, on the left bank of the Parana. In the course of this journey, Mr. Bonpland, forgetting that he was amongst his enemies, attended the soldiers of the Dictator, who had been wounded in this expedition. As to the political designs imputed to him, it would be absurd to credit them. If Mr. Bonpland entered into any relations with the chiefs of Entre Rios, it was because their protec-

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tion was essential to his undertaking: and further, at the very time when they apprehended him, the head of Ramirez had been exposed sometime in an iron cage at Santa Fe. As soon, however, as the Dictator was apprised of the treatment which Mr. Bonpland had received, he ordered his irons to be removed, then restored the part of the property which had escaped the plunder of the soldiers, and assigned him a residence in the town of Santa Maria, with the liberty of going only a few leagues round it. Finding his efforts to get back to Assumption ineffectual, Mr. Bonpland settled himself in a place between Santa Maria, and Santa Rosa, in a spot called Cerrito, or the Little Hill. In this place he was still residing when we left Paraguay, devoting himself to agriculture, which scarcely furnishes him with the means of subsistence, and beloved and respected by the inhabitants of the country, to whom he has proved himself a considerable benefactor by his general knowledge, and his skill as a physician. But separated as he is from all the objects of his affections, often in want of the necessaries of life, unable to pursue his favorite studies, and having scarcely any other society than the agents of the Dictator, or some of the poor Indians, his situation

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is truly lamentable. In vain have some of his countrymen at Monte Video exerted themselves to procure his liberty—the interference of the Court of Rio Janeiro has been even unsuccessful. The more interest that was raised for his prisoner, the more Francia rejoiced in having him in his power. The chivalrous attempt of Mr. Grandsire, who presented himself towards the close of 1824, on the Parana, as a naturalist, dispatched by the Institute of France, to effect the release of Mr. Bonpland, did him more injury than good. The Dictator spoke to me of this matter a short time before our departure, in very plain terms, so as to satisfy me that he suspected the French very much, and believed, that they entertained hostile views towards the ancient colonies of Spain*. He added, " I have heard of Mr. Grandsire on his first voyage to Buenos Ayres, and I know that he is much more employed with politics, than natural history. I have no objection to his

* When Mr. Grandsire applied for permission to go to Assumption, the Dictator replied, that that was not the time to suffer Frenchmen to come to America. The project for conferring the ancient Vice Royalty of Buenos Ayres, on the Prince of Lucca, and the late war, indisposed him very much against this nation.

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leaving this, but let him take care not to come back."

We sincerely hope that other efforts will be attended with more success, and that the companion of the illustrious de Humboldt's travels may speedily be restored to liberty and the sciences.

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CHAP. XII.

The only way in which a Person can escape from the Country.—M. Escoffier fails in an attempt to avail himself of it.

THE tranquillity which strangers continued to enjoy, was disturbed by another event. One of those persons, Mr. Escoffier, a native of Nice, being unsuccessful in his undertakings, and finding himself without any resources, adopted the courageous resolution of flying from Paraguay.

In order to give an account of the manner in which he partly executed his plan, and to furnish, at the same time, some notion of the state of captivity in which the inhabitants of an extent of country, equal at least to that of France, were held,—it becomes necessary to enter into some details.

At high water, and during the time when the Paraguay spreads itself over the surrounding plains, there is a possibility of escape by that river: but it is requisite in the first place for the fugitive to go down the river in a boat, proceeding

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only by night, and concealing himself by day in the brambles and reeds that grow plentifully on the banks; but when the stream falls within its ordinary limits, he cannot avoid getting into the hands of the sentinels which are continually crossing the current, for the purpose of watching not only the Indians, but every single vessel that passes. Every passenger was required to have the Dictator's passport, in which the object of his journey is set out, and in default of such a document he is liable to be arrested on the spot. It has happened that some smugglers were enabled two or three times to deceive the guards, but ultimately they were caught and put to death. Such is the state of the Western frontier: the Southern and Eastern frontiers are secured in the like manner. Escape on either of these sides would be still more difficult on account of the marshes and impenetrable forests, which prevent all approach, except in particular spots that are well guarded. In 1822, the Dictator erected a fort in a place called the Tranguera of San Miguel, in which four hundred cavalry were stationed, who occasionally scoured the country in detachments as far as Ytaty on one side, and the river Uruguay on the other. These troops

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would serve as an advanced post in time of war, to prevent the people of Corrientes from preparing the herb of Paraguay in these missions, and to keep up communications with Brazil. With respect to the Northern frontier, no one could attempt to pass in that direction without being amply provided for the journey, for there is a desert of more than one hundred and fifty leagues to be crossed. Besides which, the traveller must go through such places as Curugaty, Villa Real, &c., where the police is very active and vigilant. The only way of escape is to proceed direct to Grand Chaco, sailing down the Paraguay by night, which can be done without any great difficulty. Once there, the traveller follows the course of the river through a desert of ninety leagues, keeping a certain distance from the bank, to escape the observation of the sentinels, until he arrives on the border of the Parana, opposite Corrientes. It is easy for him then to make signals by fire to the inhabitants of that place, who are always ready to assist such persons. This passage has been made known by various expeditions in the time of the Spaniards; also by the accounts given by those who were prisoners amongst the Indians, and by the Indians

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themselves. During our residence at Paraguay, several persons succeeded in escaping by that way, although it was beset with dangers. Not to mention those which arise from savages, from jagars, and serpents; the fugitive, besides being obliged to traverse on foot immense forests of thorny trees and shrubs, is continually liable to lose himself in these wildernesses, to be stopped by inundations, or to see his provisions exhausted. Lastly, he incurs the danger of perishing in one of those immense conflagrations which are produced sometimes by the Indians, and sometimes by lightning, and which oftentimes consume the verdure of these countries.

Perils even such as these were unable to damp the courage of Mr. Escoffier. Attended by four free negroes, he succeeded in escaping from Assumption to Grand Chaco, in the middle of the year 1823. A negress, who had lived with one of the men, followed them, although she was then in a state of pregnancy. Two months after this, news came to the capital that Mr. Escoffier, with one of the negroes, and the negress, had been arrested some leagues below Neembucu, and brought into that town. Every one, even the partisans of the Dictator, interested them-

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selves for this young man. It was generally believed that he would have been condemned to death, which was the usual punishment assigned for persons arrested under similar circumstances; and some Englishmen who had been privy to his design, and who had, in all probability, given him some letters to take to Buenos Ayres, became very much alarmed. However, nothing of a suspicious nature was found amongst his papers; and not even the application of torture could extort from the poor negro a single word which could warrant the committal of any other person whatever. When the Dictator found out that Mr. Escoffier's views, in this clandestine attempt, were unconnected with political objects, he directed that the prisoner should remain merely under the care of the commandant of Neembucu, who, although disposed to treat the young man with every civility, yet, considering his enterprize and skill, found it necessary, for his own sake, to secure him by putting chains on his feet. Mr. Escoffier was allowed, during the day, to remain in a little tan-house, which he had constructed since his apprehension; and the negro was sent to the public gaol at Assumption. This man had acted as cook to us on a former occasion; and

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when he was allowed to go out, in order to beg for charity, he called at our residence, accompanied by a guard, and gave us the following details respecting their unfortunate journey. As soon as night closed in, they passed down the river, taking with them some provisions, a few knives, and a small axe only, which shewed great want of foresight. Had Mr. Escoffier been unable to get a gun, which certainly was not impossible, bows and arrows would have been, to a certain extent, a good substitute; but he even neglected to provide himself with fishing-hooks. They proceeded for two days in a westerly direction, with a view of reaching the upper bank, and to avoid the marshes. At the end of either the second or third day, they discovered that they were enveloped in one of those conflagrations, of which I have already spoken. To prevent its reaching them, they had recourse to the common expedient of setting fire to the dry grass where they stood, which kept the ground to leeward perfectly safe. This was the only accident the party met with during the first week of their journey. They were delayed some days by the illness and death of one of the negroes, who was indisposed at the time of their setting out, and was unable to endure the fatigues of the

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expedition. After that they began to distinguish the Indian fires, and had every reason to apprehend that they would have been detected by the smoke; they were therefore unable to do any thing whatever for themselves. But the most fatal event of all was, their having been involved in an immense glade, in the midst of a forest, from which there was only one outlet. Here they wandered about for fifteen days, without being able to find even the avenue by which they had penetrated. At last they succeeded in getting out, but all their provisions were gone. One of the negroes, who went in search of a Guinea pig, was bitten by a serpent, and died; another fell a victim to the various calamities which befel the party. The two surviving men and the negress continued their journey, subsisting on wild fruits and Guinea pigs, when they could take them. They passed the river Vermejo or Colorado, which abounds with fish, by means of a raft. If they had been only provided with hooks, they might have been able to lay in such a stock of food as would have done for them during the remaining fifteen or twenty leagues, which would have brought them to the height of Corrientes; but, destitute of those instruments, and having been without pro-

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visions for several days, they proceeded towards the banks of the Paraguay. There they made a small raft, and crossed the river, for the purpose of getting provisions in some lonely cottage; after which it was their intention to go back to Chaco, and resume their journey. It unfortunately so happened, that the very first person they met on the left bank was a sergeant of militia, who arrested them. In vain Mr. Escoffier strove to defend himself with his axe; his strength was so reduced, that he could do no more than inflict a very slight wound on his antagonist, whilst the latter, with one blow of his sabre on the head, made him measure his length on the ground. Several assistants came up, and the three fugitives were secured and sent to Neembucu.

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CHAP. XIII.

The Dictator endeavours to isolate Paraguay more and more—Stagnation of Commerce—Alliance with Brazil —Unjust Reprisals against Santa Fe—The Spaniards are condemned to civil death.

I HAVE already stated, that when the Dictator knew that he was on the eve of being attacked by Ramirez, he suspended the granting of licenses: but he very soon saw that Paraguay could not do without trade. Now and then vessels arrived with cargoes: but they were not allowed to return, and the country had no vent for its productions. In the first place, the system of licenses, and next the absolute prohibition against any person leaving the country, had the effect of lowering prices so much that the proprietors were on the point of ruin. The merchants whose warehouses were glutted with the herb of Paraguay and tobacco, saw their capital not only unproductive but every day sensibly decreasing, in consequence of the deterioration

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which their property was daily undergoing, and the expenses of keep. The simplest way of relieving them would have been to open the port, or at least to recur to the system of licenses: but the Dictator refused to take any step, alleging that Buenos Ayres had violated her treaty in imposing a duty on the importation of the herb and tobacco. But this duty had existed during the time of the licenses, so that the Dictator referred to it merely as a subterfuge. The fact was, that the disorders which had agitated the South American republics were at an end: and their governments being now legally organized, Francia dreaded more danger to his person from the tranquillity which they now enjoyed, than he had from the preceding wars. It was under these circumstances, that, although he was neither a disciple nor partisan of the Jesuits, he had recourse to one of their fundamental maxims, in order to combine the trade of Paraguay with the maintenance of an isolated position, such as was absolutely necessary to enable him to keep up his tyranny *. Brazil,

* The Jesuits would not allow the Indians of their missions to hold contact with either Spaniards or Creoles—they would not even permit any communication to be held between the different towns. There were particular spots on the borders of

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which had been just raised into an empire, appeared to Francia, in consequence of the nature of its government, and its apparent instability, to be the most convenient state with which he could enter into alliance. He accordingly communicated with General Lecor, then in command at Monte Video, and a convention was shortly afterwards concluded. The town of Ytapua was appointed as the mutual factory of this second China, where the Brazilians were to carry their merchandize to be exchanged for the productions of Paraguay, on condition that neither party would advance into the territory of the other, farther than half a league from that place. It was easy to foresee that such a system as this would not answer in practice. The Brazilians did not require the herb, as they cultivated that article themselves, and tobacco was contraband amongst them. In fact, none but traders from the province of Entre Rios, came to Ytapua, on the strength of passports from Monte Video, with commodities at a high price, in consequence of the length of the land carriage. But

each mission, where they exchanged their respective commodities. These fathers denied admittance to their missions, even to their own bishops, as well as to the governor of Paraguay.

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even this trade was very much hampered by the system of licenses, which the Dictator introduced, and the regulations which he imposed on the merchants. The impossibility of carrying goods in any other way than by land, was another obstacle to the successful progress of this undertaking; and it turned out, that this market carried off only a trifling portion of the enormous stock of herb and tobacco which lay in the capital and the other towns. It has been estimated, that more than the value of a million of piastres had been lost, either in goods or vessels, which rotted away during this time. The port of Assumption literally resembled a coast where a hundred ships had run a ground. Several of them were carried out by the first swell of the river, but were abandoned by the owners.

A great number of merchants being without any employment in the capital, withdrew to the country, to live upon a more economical scale. Those in the other towns did the same, and the inhabitants who were recently engaged in various branches of trade, were under the necessity of applying themselves to agriculture for a livelihood. This state of things necessarily suspended the circulation of money, and throughout Paraguay,

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the purchases for internal consumption, were made on the principle of exchange, as had been formerly the case*.

When the neighbouring states found out that the Dictator had established friendly relations with Brazil, at the same time that he permitted no one to leave the country, they began to suspect that he meditated hostile designs against their territory. The government of Santa Fe, under these circumstances, thought itself warranted in confiscating several chests of arms which had been destined for Paraguay. The Dictator retaliated: he collected together all the citizens of Santa Fe that he could find in his capital, and cast them into prison, including some families who had been settled for thirty years at Assumption. But his revenge was not to be gratified without blood. Amongst the merchants who came to Ytapua, there was one named Chilaber, a native of Santa Fe, who had resided for some years at Corrientes. His brother, who was a member of the Cabildo of his native city, was a party to the confiscation of the arms, and on

* It is not more than sixty years ago since money became known to the inhabitants of Paraguay. Trade before that was carried on by exchange.

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this account Chilaber thought it necessary to go by an assumed name, though he had a Brazilian passport. A spy, named Ramon Leon, recognized him, informed the Dictator who he was, and he was immediately arrested and conducted to the capital. There, without any further proceeding to establish his identity, and notwithstanding his repeated protestations of innocence, the unhappy man was shot the morning after his arrival, and his body was hung on a gibbet.

Francia next revived the consular decree of 1814, by which the Spaniards were condemned to civil death, with a prohibition to intermarry with white women—a decree which he extended to all the citizens of Entre Rios, Santa Fe, and Buenos Ayres, of whom there was a considerable number in Paraguay. It is necessary to observe, that those measures which were directed against foreigners, fell with equal severity on the women of Paraguay, who naturally preferred any other American, or a Spaniard, to their own countrymen. The tendency, however, of these prohibitions, which applied to legitimate connections only, was to increase the connections of a different description.

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CHAP. XIV.

The Dictator endeavours to render more uniform the Buildings in the City of Assumption—Various despotic and vexatious measures resulting from this attempt.

THE Dictator had afflicted the capital with a plague of another kind. It may be recollected, that when he discovered the conspiracy of 1820, his first idea was to have the streets built in a more regular manner; but not having any plan formed for the purpose, he deferred its execution. The city of Assumption is built in the form of an amphitheatre, upon a rising ground, in many places sufficiently steep, which is washed by the river Paraguay. Its streets were crooked, irregular, and the greater number so narrow, as to deserve only the name of lanes. The houses consisting of only one floor, generally stood apart from each other. They were interspersed with trees, little gardens, brushwood, and patches of verdure, and presented the aspect rather of a village than of a city. Numerous springs issued

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from the ground in every part of the town, and formed streams, or stagnated into pools. The rain water had furrowed the soil, and broken up almost all the sloping streets. This was the kind of city that the Dictator undertook to reduce into regular form, without taking into consideration the injury likely to result therefrom to the inhabitants. No doubt it was necessary to alter parts of the city, to widen the streets, and render them less filthy; but the construction of the houses, and the vegetation that surrounded them, were such as best conduced to health and enjoyment in a tropical climate, and a sandy soil. He began in 1821, by tracing out, in the least populous parts of the city, longitudinal streets, from north west to south east, crossed by others at right angles, running north east by south west, all of which were to be from thirty-five to forty feet wide. These new streets served him as a model for the others that were to be opened throughout the city. They were distant from each other a hundred paces, but whenever a public building interfered, the space was either augmented or diminished, in order to avoid it. The case was different with regard to private houses. When a new street was to be opened, the Dictator pointed out to his

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master-mason, who was his engineer, the direction in which he was to plant his stakes, and sometimes he presided in person at this operation during his evening ride: he then sent orders to the proprietors of all the houses that were upon this new line of street, to demolish them. But this measure was only preliminary, and merely served to facilitate the operation, for it was almost certain that the final direction given to the street would be out of the line of these houses that had been thrown down, and would consequently render other demolitions necessary.

Thus the despotic humour of the Dictator, aided by his ignorance, laid waste a great part of the capital, by causing numberless buildings to be demolished, which were afterwards found to be twenty-five or thirty paces out of the line of the projected street. The materials of these buildings were made use of to equalize the streets, to fill up ravines, and other inequalities of the soil; and where the hills were too steep, they were cut down. Three new squares were formed, and an old one enlarged; and in order to keep the streets dry, the Dictator compelled the proprietors of the neighbouring grounds to choke up the springs.

These pretended ameliorations went on but

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slowly, as it was frequently necessary to recommence the works, the rains often destroying, in one night, the labour of fifteen days. As the streets were not paved, the torrents formed by the heavy rains that fall in these climates, easily swept away the rubbish with which they had been laid down, and made new ravines in them with the most astonishing rapidity. In consequence of these new constructions, several of the houses were no longer on a level with the streets, whilst others had their foundations exposed; so that the rains, penetrating the earth upon which they were built, deprived it of its consistence, and several of the houses tumbled down; others, being undermined by the springs, which, when they were choked up in one place, sought a vent in another, came likewise to the ground. In a word, so wide was the devastation, that at the end of four years, the capital of Paraguay presented the aspect of a city that had been bombarded for several months. Near one half of the houses had disappeared. Whole streets were seen bordered merely by hedges of dry reeds; and amongst the thinly scattered houses, but a very few had their fronts towards the street.

As it was the Dictator's opinion that other

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changes might still be necessary, no houses were allowed to be built, but in some of the remote streets. As it was indispensable, however, to rebuild the city, he had resolved to compel, after the streets had been paved, all the rich inhabitants of the country to build houses in town, upon the sites which he should point out to them. With this view he had the foundations of several mansions laid, which he proposed to make them purchase. He said that, for the future, the capital should be peopled by the natives of Paraguay, and not by Spaniards, to whom had hitherto belonged all the best houses. Nothing impeded the Dictator: he had only to issue his commands, and they were obeyed. He therefore erected a new city with almost as little difficulty as he had destroyed the old one. He caused several hundred houses to be razed, without indemnifying, in any way, the owners*, or troubling himself about what became of them and their families. Each proprietor was required to demolish his own house; or, if he had not the means, the convicts took the task upon themselves; and afterwards they carried away whatever portion of the materials they liked.

* There were only two widows, and the physician of the troops, who received each one hundred piastres.

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Although no money was expended in indemnifying the owners, yet it may be supposed that such a project as this must have cost the state a large sum; but the Dictator payed the master workmen only, and caused their plans to be executed by some hundreds of prisoners; the circles were obliged to supply, gratuitously, all the materials; and if the buildings carrying on were outside the capital, they were also bound to furnish a certain number of workmen. It was in this manner that the fortresses upon the frontiers, several barracks, and other edifices, at Neembucu, at Assumption, and at Villa Real, were constructed. In like manner several new roads were opened through the woods, and others which had been broken up by the rains, were widened and repaired. In the same way the Dictator collected, in the capital, a quantity of materials for the construction of forty houses, which were to be let for the benefit of the state. At every moment the country people were called upon, either for their personal services, or for the use of their cattle. The Dictator, moreover, had allowed to remain in force an old Spanish custom, the *leva*, or impressment, according to which all workmen, cattle, carts, instruments, and tools, found in the streets, were

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laid violent hands upon, and put in requisition for the government works. In the city of Assumption, the officers, and even the private soldiers, resorted to this measure for their own account and profit, without, however, the knowledge of the Dictator. Still the practice deterred the country people from coming to the capital to sell the produce of their farms.

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CHAP. XV.

The Dictator puts a temporary stop to Imprisonments and Executions—Singular Order—He secularizes the Monks, and abolishes the Cabildos—He shews a disposition to renew friendly relations with the Brazils, and takes a hostile attitude with regard to the Republics.

WHEN the Dictator saw his power submitted to without resistance throughout Paraguay, and that he had no longer any thing to fear from internal or external enemies, his mind became calm, and he appeared inclined to return to more moderate sentiments. I have every reason to suppose, that this change is mainly to be attributed to the suicide of one of the persons in his employment, which took place about the middle of the year 1824. A young man, of whose capacity the Dictator entertained a high opinion, and for whom he had created the office of secretary of state, having committed some trifling errors in the exercise of his functions, became alarmed for the consequences. Dreading to be reproached or dismissed by the Dictator, he resolved to drown himself, though, as first officer of the government, he might

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have effected his escape. Before dying, he wrote a letter to the Dictator, in which he gave an account of his official conduct, adding, that in the position in which he was, he considered that flight would dishonour his country and disgrace his name. The Dictator, who, no doubt, began to perceive how heavily his yoke bore, even upon those persons who were most devoted to him, could not hear of this death without emotion; at least, from that moment he became more courteous. He hinted to those about him, that the time was not far distant when Paraguay might enjoy some liberty. Imprisonments became less frequent; none but criminals were sentenced to death; and the denunciations of informers were no longer listened to. He even ordered a servant, who came to accuse his master, to be punished with twenty-five blows of a stick. He broke several officers, who, having been raised from the dregs of the people, had signalised themselves by their insolence towards their fellow citizens. Several commanders of circles were dismissed for a similar cause; and some were punished for their extortions. These he replaced, if not by individuals of the first class amongst the people of Paraguay, at least by farmers, who

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might be supposed to attach some importance to their own reputation and the public good. He went so far even as to set at liberty, in the course of this year, a great number of state prisoners. In fine, the people began to take breath. However, when under the influence of his hypochondriacal affection, he indulged in acts well calculated to spread terror in Paraguay. Thus a poor woman, who knowing no other way of getting an audience of the Dictator, went up to his closet window; she was sent to prison for her temerity, and her husband, who had not even heard of the pretended crime, was obliged to share in her punishment. The Dictator was so deeply offended at this want of respect, as he called it, towards his person, that he gave to the sentinel placed before his door the following order:—"If any passenger should dare to fix his eyes upon the front of my house, you will fire at him; if you miss him, this is for a second shot, (handing him another musket loaded with ball), and if you miss again, I shall take care not to miss you." This order being quickly known through the city, the inhabitants carefully avoided passing before this terrible palace, or if any person were obliged to do so, he kept his eyes

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constantly bent upon the ground. A fortnight had passed without any accident, when an Indian of the tribe of Payagua, who knew nothing of the order, stopped to look at the government-house: the sentinel discharged his carbine at him, but missed him, probably intentionally. The report of fire-arms brought the Dictator out, and when the cause was made known to him, he revoked the order, pretending not to recollect that he had ever given it.

Towards the close of this year 1824, and in the beginning of the next, he adopted two measures, one of which at least met with the approval of the more enlightened part of the population. This measure was the suppression of the four monasteries which still existed in Paraguay. The Dictator's decree to this effect was notified to the superior of each community. In the notice he stated his motives, and invited the monks to apply in writing to the vicar-general for secularization, declaring, at the same time, all those to be useless members of the state, who should neglect this step. Every one of the regulars, though much against their inclinations, applied for secularization, which was granted in every case except in those of five individuals, of

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whom three were Spaniards, and two natives of Buenos Ayres. The property of these monasteries was sequestered for the benefit of the state. The convent of Mercy became a park for artillery, and that of the Recollets a barrack; the temple of Saint Dominic replaced, as a parish church, that of the Incarnation, which was demolished by order of the Dictator.

The second measure was the suppression of the cabildos, which already existed only in name. A representation made by the cabildo of the capital to the Dictator, relative to some police regulations, gave rise to this act of authority. The Dictator, indignant at this proceeding, replied to the cabildo in the harshest terms, but not being able, without committing gross inconsistency, to take vengeance on a body which he himself had chosen, he contented himself with sending to prison the secretary who had drawn up the representation. As the latter filled also the office of concierge or keeper, the members of the cabildo dared not send to him for the keys of the town-house, so that no meeting of the body took place for several weeks. It was then that this municipal body, popular when first instituted, was abolished, not only in the

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capital but in all the other towns in Paraguay. However, the Dictator, finding it impossible to do without some local authority in the city of Assumption, nominated, in the beginning of 1825, a new municipal body composed of two alcaldes, as judges on mesne process, a *fiel executor* or officer of police, and an advocate for minors, but he did not specify the duration of their functions.

At this time it was whispered about that the Dictator was anxious to form a closer connexion with Brazil, and with that view he had renewed his intercourse with the governor of Monte Video. But it appears that the Brazilian government paid no attention to these overtures until the moment when the war with the confederation of Rio de la Plata was on the point of commencing. It was only at Buenos Ayres that we heard, from two fugitives, of the arrival of the Brazilian Consul at the city of Assumption in 1825. Notwithstanding this attempt at reconciliation, it would be altogether absurd to suppose that the Dictator had ever any intention to submit himself to the Emperor Don Pedro, or through his mediation to enter into negociations with Spain. He has too high an opinion of himself and of the resources at his command, to think of becoming

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dependant upon any power whatsoever; besides, he has placed himself in such a position, that no other course remains to him but to bury himself under the ruins of the monstrous edifice which he has raised. It was also not till after our departure from Paraguay, that we were informed of a circumstance which took place in 1824. The governor of Buenos Ayres proposed to the Dictator to send, as the other provinces of the ancient vice-royalty had done, deputies to the general congress, which was to decide the question of their federative re-union *. The only

* Doctor Don Juan Garcia de Cosia, native of Corrientes, but established at Buenos Ayres, where he was a member of the Court of Justice, had been charged with the mission, not only as far as it regarded his native city, but also Paraguay, in case the government of the latter permitted him to pass in person: but having been informed of the Dictator's intentions, he did not proceed, but sent him the despatch from Corrientes. He was at the same time, the bearer of a letter to me from my family, which Mr. Pivadavia, then minister of state, had the kindness to give him, with a request that he would endeavour to persuade the Dictator to set us at liberty. Mr. Stephen Perichon, a Frenchman, who had been established for several years at Corrientes, and to whom we are under the greatest obligations, on hearing this circumstance, advised Dr. Cosia not to make any attempt in our favour, and not even to forward my letter. Fortunately this advice was followed; for had the Dictator suspected that the government of Buenos Ayres interested itself for us, he would have taken umbrage, and never allowed us to quit Paraguay.

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reply made by Francia was to throw the bearer of the dispatch into prison. Having thus put himself into a state of hostility with these republics, it was quite natural that he should endeavour to connect himself with their enemy, the Emperor of Brazil.

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CHAP. XVI.

The English are permitted to depart—The Author asks for a similar permission—Opinion of the Dictator upon the Policy of France towards the Republics—Messrs. Rengger and Longchamp quit Paraguay.

In the beginning of 1825, the Dictator received from Mr. Parish, charge d'affaires of his Britannic Majesty at Buenos Ayres, the notification of the Treaty of Commerce which had been entered into between England and Buenos Ayres; the most important result of which would be the recognition of the South American republics. In making him this communication, Mr. Parish solicited permission for the English merchants in Paraguay, to leave the country with their effects. The news of the recognition produced the desired effect. The Dictator ordered the English to get their vessels ready; but he would permit the crews to be formed only of foreigners and negroes. They were also prohibited from exporting any articles but those which they had

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purchased with their own money; so that the price of a ship, which a Spaniard had sold on credit to an Englishman, was confiscated, and consequently lost to the Spaniard, who had been ignorant of the prohibition. They sailed in the months of April and May. The Dictator wrote to Mr. Parish by the first vessel that sailed, and to justify the detention of the subjects of his Britannic Majesty, he stated that they had only shared the fate to which the necessity of circumstances had condemned all the inhabitants of Paraguay; that moreover, they had no reason to complain, since they had come of their own accord, without any one having invited them *.

Not wishing, however, to let it appear, that in allowing the English to depart he had yielded to necessity, he gave permission, at the same time, to Don Jose Tomas Ysaci, a native of Paraguay, to go on a voyage with two brigantines.

* Although this answer was not very ceremonious, it was, at least, an answer, and in substance a satisfactory one. But some time after the Dictator acted with less politeness towards Mr. Parish. On receipt of a letter from him, containing a request that Mr. Bonpland should be set at liberty, the Dictator, merely enclosed it in a fresh envelope, and sent it back, with the following laconic superscription:—"To Parish, English Consul at Buenos Ayres."

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This gentleman was one of the first merchants in the city of Assumption who became our friend, and, to the many acts of kindness already received by us at his hands, he was desirous of adding that of taking us to Buenos Ayres, in case we could obtain passports *. As other foreigners were allowed to go away, it was a favourable moment to apply to the Dictator. I accordingly went to his house on the 27th of March: as he was occupied at the moment, I retired. But he almost immediately sent for me, asked me what I wanted, and without replying to my request, ordered me to go and inspect some forty or fifty recruits, who had fallen sick. After seeing them, I returned to give him an account of my visit. He then asked me several questions about my travels in the interior of Paraguay, the observations I had made, and what I intended

* Under other circumstances such an offer would not have been extraordinary, but at a moment when the opportunities were so rare, when the vessels were so overloaded, and when the most insignificant pretext might cause the license to be revoked, it certainly was a great favour. I therefore only fulfil a duty in here expressing our gratitude to Don Jose Tomas Ysaci, as also to Don Jose de Maria, who made us the same offer, as soon as he received from the agent of an English house, an order to get his vessel ready.

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publishing. He appeared to be very well satisfied with the recognition of the new republics by England, and said to me, upon this subject.—"The French government was wrong not to have been beforehand with the English. The analogy between the characters of both nations, a common religion, and the nature of the produce and manufactures of France, which are better adapted to the wants of these countries, seemed to call for amicable relations, which would have opened new and invaluable channels to French commerce. But that government, instead of signalizing itself by an act of liberality, which was in perfect conformity with the interests of France, has preferred maintaining, by a ruinous expedition, a tottering throne, the fall of which it can only defer, but not ultimately prevent. I should not be surprised to see that government making an attack upon our republics* in the name of Ferdinand VII., and that

* Let it not be supposed that this expression, by which the Dictator so ludicrously confounded the political organization of Paraguay with that of the other new states of South America, is one of my choosing: on the contrary, I have in this instance, as in others, endeavoured to translate, as literally as possible, the expressions he made use of.

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is one of my reasons for not permitting the French, who are here, to depart; with regard to your request, we shall consider of it." It was nearly two months before I received any answer from the Dictator, or before Mr. Ysaci, whose vessels had been ready to sail since the commencement of May, got permission to depart. I therefore began to despair of being able to profit of this opportunity to quit Paraguay: the more particularly as the Dictator had it intimated to me, that I should soon be appointed chief physician to the troops, and have the direction of a new military hospital, which he intended to establish, and upon a proper site for which I had been consulted. At length, on the morning of the 25th of May, the Dictator sent the papers, authorising the departure of one of the brigantines, to Mr. Ysaci, with an order to sail at one o'clock, in the afternoon; and at eleven o'clock, an officer brought me passports for myself and Mr. Longchamp, with an order upon the public treasury for the services I had rendered the state in my medical capacity. This order contained the additional permission, which had been but rarely granted, of taking the money out of the country. We thus had only

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two hours to regulate our affairs, and pack up our collections of objects of natural history, several of which were of a very fragile nature. But there was no time for hesitation: it was necessary to set out at once, or run the risk of not quitting Paraguay till after the death of the Dictator. We immediately set to work—packed up with all possible haste a part of our collection, and the articles we stood most in need of; and, leaving the remainder in the hands of some confidential persons, we went on board the vessel. Immediately afterwards we weighed anchor, and sailed at the prescribed hour, amidst the good wishes of a multitude of spectators, of all ranks, who had assembled on the shore*.

Amongst our fellow passengers, was a Captain Hervaud, a Frenchman, who had come to Assumption, in 1821, in one of Mr. Ysaci's vessels, of which he had the command. This honest man, who had lost all his fortune by three shipwrecks, considered himself destined to remain a prisoner in Paraguay, when Mr. Ysaci, by representing the

* The moment after a ship receives its papers it sails, even though no hour for its departure should be specified, and hastens to get out of the river Paraguay, lest the license should be revoked, or an order sent to detain it at the mouth of the river.

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age, misfortunes, and exemplary conduct of this officer, obtained permission from the Dictator to include him amongst the ship's crew. A less agreeable part of the company consisted of the five cordeliers, to whom the Dictator would not allow secularization, and whom he now sent out of the country. He treated, in the same manner, five other monks, who were taken from the state prisons, and put on board Don Jose de Maria's ship, which sailed the day after us.

We thus, after a sojourn of six years in Paraguay, during four of which we were forcibly detained, were granted permission to quit it. It is only justice to state, that, during all that time, Dr. Francia never directly threw any difficulties in the way of our researches; but, on the contrary, gave us, more than once, proofs of his good will. Would that I could speak as favourably of his administration! To the conduct of the inhabitants of Paraguay, both Creoles and Spaniards, towards us, we can only allude in terms of praise; and we shall always recollect with gratitude, the hospitable reception which they gave us.

END OF THE FIRST PART.

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SECOND PART.

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THE REIGN OF DR. FRANCIA.

SECOND PART.

CHAP. I.

General idea of the Government of Paraguay—Organization and composition of the Magistracy.

As, in the preceding narrative, I mentioned merely those details of administration, which I thought necessary to enable the reader to understand the nature of the events referred to, he would consequently form but a very incomplete idea of the dictatorial government of Doctor Francia, a sketch of which I have undertaken to give, were I not here to endeavour to describe the several parts of the machine of government, as they existed at the time of our departure from Paraguay. The whole power of government, as must be very evident from what has been already said, is centred in the person of the Dictator. If the charge of

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ministro de hæienda, or minister of finance, who, under the Spaniards, was not subject to the governor, but received his orders directly from the viceroy, has been allowed still to exist, the person who fills it is nothing more than a head clerk to Doctor Francia. A secretary of state, entitled *fiel de fecho*, or bearing testimony to the signature, receives reports, judicial proceedings, and, in fine, all papers addressed to the Dictator, and which he lays before him. Assisted by an under secretary, this officer writes, from the dictation of Francia, his answers, decrees, and judgments. The original documents, signed by the Dictator himself, are usually deposited in the archives, of which the *fiel de fecho* is the keeper; and in that capacity he furnishes the necessary copies. Besides these two secretaries, there still exists, at Assumption, a remnant of the ancient cabildo, consisting of two alcaldes, who, with equal jurisdiction, discharge separately the functions of judges on mesne process, both in civil and criminal matters, throughout all Paraguay. There are, besides, conciliators and commissioners of police in the capital, together with a *fiel executor* (faithful executioner), who is charged with the police of the markets, the inspection of weights and

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measures, &c. And, lastly, a *defensor de Menores* (advocate of minors), whose duty it is to watch over the interests of minors, and of slaves, who are in this respect assimilated to minors.

The territory of Paraguay is divided, as in former times, into twenty sections, or *commandancias;* four of which have for capitals the towns of Neembucu or Villa del Pilar, Villa Rica, Yquamandiu or Villa de San Pedro, and Villa Real de la Concepcion, the only towns in the whole country besides the capital, and the only ones, also, which are called *Villas—Assumption* being distinguished by the name of *Ciudad.* These *villas,* since the suppression of their cabildos, which were charged with the local administration of justice, enjoy no longer any exclusive privilege. Each section is under the authority of a commandant, who executes the orders of the Dictator, directs the operations of the police, decides on minor offences, and exercises the functions of conciliator. He has under his orders the *zeladores,* or inferior police officers, of whom there is one for each partido or portion of a section, which is the second and last degree of the territorial division. There is also in each section a receiver of taxes.

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That part of Paraguay which is known under the name of the *Missions*, is governed in a somewhat different manner. It extends over a surface of six hundred square leagues, on the right bank of Parana, south east of Assumption *. The population consists of eight tribes of Indians, and some thousand whites, who obtained land from the government, and established themselves there after the expulsion of the Jesuits. The white population is, as in the rest of the country, governed by the commandants; but the Indians attached to the soil and condemned to work on the state lands, have peculiar officers, who, under the name of administrators, manage the state lands, besides exercising the functions of commandant over the Indians. These two classes of functionaries are under the immediate jurisdiction of a *subdelegado*, or lieutenant of the government, who has the chief command of all the country of the Missions, without however having any control over the financial part of the administration. Several other villages, inhabited by Indians in the interior of the country, which

* From this it is evident, that the theocracy of the Jesuits extended over a very small portion; and not, as is generally believed, over the whole of Paraguay.

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formerly belonged to the Jesuits or other religious communities, have also managers set over them, and are subjected to the authority of the commandant in whose section they happen to be situated. The laws by which Paraguay ought to be governed, are those made in the time of the Spaniards. The junta, when it proclaimed the independence of the country, had sanctioned these laws, reserving, however, the right of modifying their application afterwards, as the new order of things should render necessary. The judges in mesne process should, consequently, be guided by their old laws. But the junta, in the first place, and then the consuls, and lastly, the Dictator, introduced so many limitations, either as judges in the last resort, or in the exercise of their administrative power, that in a short time there remained no other law than their will. Nevertheless, under the two first governments, the decrees and ordinances were still published, either from the pulpit or by beat of drum. As there was no printing press in the country, this, from the earliest times, was the only method they made use of to promulgate the contents of public documents. But the Dictator deeming this formality useless,

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contented himself with sending his orders to the commandants; so that it is never but by accident that the public are informed of his will, or of a new law, the application of which besides is to vary according to persons and circumstances. This ignorance of the laws, which existed already more or less under the Spaniards, is now so complete, that the inhabitants of Paraguay only acquire a knowledge of them, by incurring the penalties for their non observance. This ignorance extends even to the judges, the Dictator alone excepted; so that they are obliged, in order to avoid too glaring blunders, to employ a director or assessor, chosen and paid by themselves, as was the custom under the old system, when the governor himself had one. These assessors are the real judges, the titular ones being of no further use than to sign the sentences. Before the revolution these assessors were lawyers, who had, at least, some kind of education; but, as many of them, in consequence of old personal differences, were obnoxious to Doctor Francia, and as others had been too openly influenced by bribery, the Dictator sent them all to prison; for it is to the assessors that he usually attributes any

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corruption in the administration of justice. For these reasons it was that, when we quitted Paraguay, these situations were filled by individuals nearly as ignorant as the judges, so that they were guided by no other code than that portion, more or less, of good sense with which they happened to be endowed. In too many instances private interest formed the sole principle of their judgments. Under the government of the Spaniards, the judges were chosen from the rich landed proprietors and merchants,—two classes of men equally interested in submitting to the direction of persons skilled in the laws. As, under the present government, the judges are taken from the lower classes of society, the necessity for such aid becomes still more apparent; but well educated men or lawyers are no longer to be found in the country.

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CHAP. II.

Degree of Jurisdiction—The inviolability of the Dictator extends to the lowest Agent of his Despotism—The military are peculiarly favoured—Nature of Punishments.

THE different branches of justice are administered in the following manner. In civil cases, the parties commence by appearing before the justice of peace, that is to say, before the commandant, or one of the alcaldis, according as they inhabit the country or the capital, and plead their cause in person. Should this attempt at conciliation not succeed, the suit takes its course and is heard, in the first instance, before one of the alcaldis, where it proceeds with a slowness proportioned to the ignorance of the advocates, and the profit arising to the judge from delay. When judgment is given, the parties have the right of appeal to the Dictator, who in this kind of causes usually decides with the strictest impartiality; but, if, unfortunately, he should disapprove of the ground of the suit, or

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if the parties interested are displeasing to him, the pleadings are thrown aside, and the case remains undecided.

Besides these judges, there formerly existed a tribunal of commerce, which was suppressed in 1824, and the jurisdiction of a first alcalde substituted in its place. It is scarcely necessary to state, that no action can be brought against the state; and even in a suit, where one of the parties is employed under government, no matter how foreign to his functions may be the subject in litigation, the hearing must take place before the Dictator, who is the sole judge in such cases.

Minor offences are usually not punished unless the injured person comes forward to prosecute, or the delinquent has been taken in the fact. In this case, one of the alcaldes, or the commandant of the circle, after hearing the complaint and defence, immediately pronounces sentence, and orders it to be put in execution. If the case should not admit of being so summarily decided, which very rarely happens, the accused can only escape incarceration and chains, by depositing a sum of money, or furnishing sufficient securities; in which case the pleadings are carried

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on in writing. The reason of this is, that in all species of causes, the principal emoluments of the judges arise from his signature of the necessary documents. Should the accused be acquitted, he dares not bring an action against his prosecutor, though the law authorises him to do so; and the calumny remains unpunished. These minor offences are visited by fine and imprisonment, or by corporal punishments, when the culprit does not belong to the white population. Should he consider the sentence too severe, he may appeal to the Dictator; this, however, is but seldom done, in consequence of the expense and delay attendant upon such proceeding; and also because the appeal will not be admitted, until the fine awarded, in the first instance, be paid: hence the proverb *pagar y apelar*, pay and afterwards appeal. These fines are, as it may be easily believed, frequently imposed, inasmuch as a part of them comes to the judge.

In criminal cases, or such as are deemed so, the justice of the place where the crime has been committed, draws up an information, which is sent to the Dictator, and if the accused has been arrested, he is at the same time transferred to the prisons of the capital. According to the

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nature of the crime, and often according to the humour in which he finds himself, the Dictator immediately decides without having either seen or heard the accused, or else he sends him to be tried by one of the alcaldis. State crimes, damage done to public property, smuggling, highway robbery, and attempts to escape, are tried by the Dictator himself, and are generally visited with sentence of death, which is immediately put into execution. He comprises in the list of state crimes, every act, and every expression, which to his gloomy and suspicious disposition may appear to strike at his authority; and that not only as to his own person, but also as to the persons of all those employed under him, including even the private soldiers; so that the citizens, to avoid being declared traitors to the country, are forced to bear, without murmuring, numberless persecutions from the most subaltern instruments of the despotism of this man.

Should the accused be fortunate enough to be sent for trial before one of the alcaldis, his life is no longer in danger. The alcalde appoints him an accuser and defender, chosen from the merchants of the town; who, knowing nothing of legal proceedings, employ advocates to draw

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up the pleadings; and, as it frequently happens that these advocates are also assessors to the alcalde, they are consequently themselves the judges. In fine, the sentence is submitted to the Dictator, who never confirms nor changes it, so that it remains without effect, and all these proceedings turn out to be but so many vain and insignificant forms. This is so much the case, that the moment a cause is sent for trial before one of the alcaldis, the Dictator decides the fall of the accused by specifying the kind of imprisonment he is to undergo; and though in no instance does he fix the duration of that imprisonment, it is, in fact, perpetual with regard to all those charged with state crimes, murders, and burglaries; whilst the other prisoners are set at liberty at the end of three or six years. The alcaldis can set at liberty those only whom they have condemned for minor offences, and who have not appealed to the Dictator.

All those who concur in supporting his authority, are beyond the jurisdiction of the magistracy: thus it is the Dictator himself who sits in judgment upon the soldiers of the line, accused of serious crimes; and when the prosecutor is a private individual, the sentence is

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always lenient. However, should his own authority be compromised, he becomes inexorable, and will shew as little favour to a soldier as to a mere citizen. Several of the military have been shot for political crimes, and others have died in consquence of the severe flogging inflicted upon them.

All those sentenced to capital punishment are shot, as was the practice during the last years of the Spanish domination, when the laws for preventing cruel punishments had fallen into desuetude. On the day of the execution, a gibbet is erected, to which the culprit is attached; this, however, is not always the case: in general, the military alone are subjected to flogging, but the whites, who were formerly exempted from it, may now be sentenced to this punishment. However, to authorise its infliction, there must be an express order from the Dictator. With regard to imprisonment, the following is the manner of it:— In the country parts where there are no prisons, persons who have been arrested are secured by being set in the stocks, which are always at hand, in the house of the commandant, where those condemned for minor offences undergo their punishment. In the towns they are confined in

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the guard-houses. When a prisoner is to be transferred to the capital, irons are first put upon his feet, and he is then placed sideways upon a horse, or if he cannot maintain himself in this position, his legs are tied under the horse's belly, his right leg and arm being firmly bound to a wooden bar, and his left arm made fast to his body. Thus crucified, he is driven in a hard trot to the place of his destination.

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CHAP. III.

Public Prison—State Prison—Wretched condition of the Prisoners—Confiscation.

At Assumption there are two kinds of prisons, namely, the public prison and the state prison. The first, though it also contains some prisoners of state, is particularly appropriated to persons accused of, or condemned for, other crimes. The building is a hundred feet in length, and like all the houses in Paraguay, has only a ground floor, which is divided into eight apartments. The court attached to it contains about twelve thousand square feet. In each apartment are huddled together from thirty to forty prisoners, many of whom not being able to find room to lie on the floor, sleep in hammocks suspended one over the other. These forty persons remain shut up twelve hours out of the twenty-four, in this confined apartment, without windows or air holes, and that in a country where the heat is, for three quarters of the year, from twenty-two, to

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twenty-eight degrees of Reaumur, and under a roof which is heated by the sun during the day to more than fifty degrees. From these causes, the perspiration of the prisoners may be seen streaming from hammock to hammock, till it reaches the floor. When to the effects arising from such a state as this, are joined those resulting from unwholesome food, and the filth and inaction of the prisoners, it will be evident, that were it not for the great salubrity of the climate of Paraguay, the most fatal diseases must have been generated in these dens. The court of the prison is covered with little huts, which are occupied by prisoners awaiting their trials, those who have been condemned for minor offences, and a few state prisoners. They were allowed to construct these huts, when the apartments became over-crowded. Here, at least, they breathe the cool night air, but the filth is as great as in the interior of the prison. Some of the prisoners confined in the court, are led forth every day to be employed in the public works, and have thus an opportunity of taking exercise. Upon these occasions, they are chained two by two, or else wear the *grilette*, which is a thick ring of iron round the foot. The great majority of the remaining prisoners wear other irons,

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called *Gullos**, which often weigh twenty-five pounds, and almost incapacitate them from walking. The state supplies the prisoners employed in the public works with a little food, and some articles of clothing; the others maintain themselves at their own expense, or by means of the alms which two or three of their body, accompanied by a soldier, are allowed to collect every day throughout the city. Relief is sometimes sent them by charitably disposed persons, or in fulfilment of vows.

We frequently visited these frightful prisons, either to see some sick prisoner, or to give an opinion on some question of forensic medicine. There might be seen confounded, the Indian and the Mulatto, the white man and the negro, the master and the slave; there were mingled all ranks and ages, the guilty and the innocent, the convict and the accused, the highway robber and the debtor; in fine, the assassin and the patriot, and in several instances it happened that they were bound by the same chain. But what completes this frightful picture is, the ever increasing demoralization of the great majority of the prisoners, and the fero-

* These are two iron rings worn round the ancles, and united by a cross bar. Two pair are frequently put upon a prisoner.

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cious joy which they exhibit on the arrival of a new victim.

The female prisoners, of whom there are fortunately but few, occupy an apartment in an enclosure divided from the principal court by a palisading. They have, however, more or less an opportunity of communicating with the other prisoners.

Women of a respectable rank, who had drawn upon themselves the anger of the Dictator, are there confounded with prostitutes and criminals, and exposed to all the insults of the male prisoners. They are also loaded with irons, an exemption from which is not granted even to those in a state of pregnancy.

I cannot here refrain from making honourable mention of the gaoler of these prisons, named Gomez. This good-hearted man has always sought, not only by the most humane conduct, but also by the sacrifice of a part of his scanty salary, to alleviate the sufferings to which he is witness, and that even at the risk of incurring the Dictator's resentment. It is true that he had himself, though innocent, pined for several years in these dungeons, into which he had been thrown as a state prisoner: it was after releasing him, that

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the Dictator imposed upon him the office of gaoler, which he dared not refuse.

Those confined in the public prison being allowed to communicate with their friends, and receive assistance from them, still consider themselves fortunate, when they compare their fate with that of the unfortunate beings who occupy the state prisons. It is in the different barracks that these state prisoners are placed; they consist of cells, or little dungeons, underground, damp, and so low and contracted, that a man cannot stand upright, except when he is under the middle of the vault. There the prisoners, particularly marked out as objects of the Dictator's vengeance, undergo solitary confinement: others are shut up in cells, in parties of two and four. All are loaded with irons, and have a sentinel continually in the same room with them. The door, which is left half open during the day, is closed at sun-set. They are not allowed to light candles, nor to pursue any kind of occupation whatsoever. One of these captives, whom I knew, having succeeded in taming some mice that visited his prison, the sentinel one day pursued them, for the purpose of killing them. They are not allowed to shave, or cut their hair or nails. Their families are not per-

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mitted to send them food more than twice a day, and that food must be of what is considered in the country, the coarsest kind—namely, flesh meat, and manioc roots. The soldiers, to whom the food is delivered at the gates of the barrack, thrust their bayonets into it, to ascertain that there are neither letters nor tools concealed in it, and frequently they appropriate it to themselves, or throw it away. When a prisoner falls sick, no one is allowed to visit him, unless at the last extremity, and even then only during the day. All night the door is closed, and the dying man is abandoned to his own sufferings. His irons are not taken off even at the approach of death. I saw Doctor Sabala, whom I was allowed by the special favour of the Dictator to visit in the last days of his malady, die with the *grillos* on his feet; he was even not permitted to receive the sacraments.

The prisoners of state are often subjected to still more inhuman treatment by the commandants of the barracks, who hope by so doing to please their chief.

When we quitted Paraguay, the entire number of persons in confinement might amount to about 500, one tenth of whom, at least, were state prisoners.

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Besides these punishments, there is also that of confiscation of property, but which can be inflicted only by the Dictator himself. In general, all those who have been declared *traidorés a la patria*, or traitors to the country, are visited with it; it is sometimes incurred for very trifling causes. A young merchant, who having been unjustly imprisoned for having had a dispute with an officer of the customs, offered to pay to the state 3000 piastres for his liberty, but all his property was confiscated.

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CHAP. IV.

Police—Passports—Those for Foreign Countries are delivered only by the Dictator—His reason for allowing no one to leave the Country—Suppression of the Post-Office, and its results—Other oppressive measures of the Police.

THE police is exercised in Paraguay by all those in place, from the Dictator down to the *zeladores*. The former does not confine himself to prescribing general measures, but when the occasion offers, executes them in person. It is, however, the alcaldis in the capital, and the commandants in the provinces, who are specially charged with this part of the administration. Under their orders the *zeladores*, unaccompanied during the day, but aided all night by some militia soldiers, go the rounds in their district, pay strict attention to every group of persons they see, and take up vagrants. In Assumption, instead of these there are numerous patroles of the regular troops, who traverse the city at night, challenge all those

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whom they meet in the streets after ten o'clock, and frequently conduct them to the public prison, to pass the rest of the night there. Besides, there is no lack of officious persons, who, without being expressly engaged by authority, carry on a kind of secret police. In Paraguay, moreover, every thing is discovered with the most astonishing facility, since the Dictator declared, that any person who knew of a crime, or an action reputed to be such, and who did not immediately denounce it to the proper authority, should be considered equally culpable as the principal. In the capital, arrests are made by the regular troops; in the circles, by the militia. It has sometimes happened, that more than two thousand men have been employed in pursuit of a deserter.

An essential branch of the police, is that relating to passports, with one of which every person wishing to quit the country, or travel in the interior, to a distance of more than twenty leagues from his residence, must be provided. Those for foreign countries, can be obtained from the Dictator only, the others also are delivered by him only in the capital; but in the provinces, the commandants give them. On reaching his place of destination, the traveller must present his pass-

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port, without delay, to the competent authority, and apply to him for a new one when he wishes to return home. The manner in which these passports are drawn up, has nothing in common with the ordinary formula of such documents. They are petitions, in which the traveller states the motives of his journey, the place to which he wishes to go, the manner in which he proposes to travel, whether by land or water; and if in the latter way, he must specify the vessel, or boat, in which he intends making his passage*.

Whilst the navigation was still free, the Dictator granted passports to any one who wished to

* As a specimen of the official style introduced by the Dictator, I shall subjoin the original, with a translation, of the passport that I received to quit Paraguay. It was written, as the usual practice is, by a clerk of customs, after the prescribed formula, and in very bad Spanish.

(L. S.) Quarenta y ocho reales. Sello primero. Anos de mil ochocientos veinte y quatro y veinte y cinco.

Exlmo Senor,

Juan Rodolfo Rengger, natural de la republica de Suisa, y residente en la capital de esta republica, ante V. E. con el debido acatamiento digo: que intento bajar a las provincias de abasco en uno de los buques de Jose Tomas Ysasi, natural de esta republica, residente en el comercio de esta misma capital, y vecino de Buenos Ayres, que se halla proximo a marchar para el citado destino. Y a fin de poderlo verificar a V. E. pido, y

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quit the country, but in proportion as he extended the system of licenses, the permission to quit

rendidamente suplico se digne concederme el supremo permiso. Es gracia que solicito y espero alcanzar de la benignidad de V. E.

Exlmo Senor,

JUAN RODOLFO RENGGER, DR.

Asuncion y Mayo 25 *de* 1825.

Concedido sea en el mismo buque o otro que se proporcione.

(Signature of the Dictator).

TRANSLATION.

Most Excellent Senor,

I, John Rodolphus Rengger, native of the republic of Switzerland, and inhabiting the capital of the republic of Paraguay, present myself with all due respect before Your Excellency, and say, that I desire to go to the lower provinces in one of the vessels of Don Jose Tomas Ysaci, native of this republic, and residing in this capital on account of his commercial affairs, and domiciliated at Buenos Ayres, which Ysaci is now ready to set out for the aforesaid destination. In order to be able to accomplish this voyage, I beg and humbly supplicate Your Excellency to deign to grant me your high permission; this is the favour that I solicit, and hope to obtain from Your Excellency's goodness.

Most Excellent Senor,

JOHN RODOLPHUS RENGGER, DR.

Assumption, May 25th, 1825.

Granted either for that vessel or any other that may offer.

RODRIGUEZ DI FRANCIA.

The petitioner never adds the date: it is the Dictator himself who puts the date of the day upon which he grants the passport.

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Paraguay, was more rarely accorded—at length, he would permit no vessels to take passengers until the year 1825, when he allowed a number of foreigners to embark. As to quitting the country by land, and crossing the Parana, that has been continually prohibited since the commencement of the misunderstanding between the Dictator and Artigas. This species of captivity, in which an entire population has been held, must be considered as the necessary result of the Dictator's policy: he did not allow the natives to quit the country, because experience had convinced him that they would come back, imbued with liberal ideas, the propagation of which must necessarily prove injurious to him. On the other hand, as he was in daily apprehension of an attack from the neighbouring provinces, he dreaded lest some of those allowed to quit the country, might serve as guides to the enemy, and facilitate an invasion by them.

When he ceased granting passports to the natives of Paraguay, it was natural enough that he should not continue the favour to foreigners; but with regard to these, he had still other motives. The Spaniards, in case of an attack from the mother country, would serve as hostages. The other

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foreigners enabled him to put himself in relation with the European powers, which was the chief object of his ambition; so much so, that it was the satisfaction he felt at receiving dispatches from an envoy of the King of England, that induced him to set the great majority of the foreigners in the country at liberty. As to the citizens of the provinces of the south, who were in Paraguay, we were enabled to judge by the example of those of Santa Fe, how they would satisfy him as to the hostilities he was likely to experience from their countrymen.

One would be led to suppose, that according to his plan of isolation, the entrance into, as well as egress from, the country, should be prohibited; but new comers being always so closely watched, and their persons secured on the slightest suspicious appearance, the ingress remained free. However, after our arrival at Buenos Ayres, we were informed that the Dictator had ordered away several vessels that had come to the mouth of the Paraguay.

Another equally important measure, was the suppression of the post-office. Formerly, letters were sent by post, overland from Assumption to

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Corrientes, and from thence to the provinces of the south; a similar establishment existed for the correspondence with the interior, between the capital and the towns of the second class. These offices were all suppressed, as giving too great facility for carrying on mutual intercourse. The Dictator, however, allowed the post-masters to retain their places, in order to expedite official letters, and collect the postage of all others brought by private conveyance; for the latter were to pass through their hands, and to be charged with postage in the same manner as if they had been transmitted at the cost of government. The Dictator had another motive still for this measure. It enabled him to get possession of all letters to and from foreign countries. These he opened, and according as their contents were favourable, or otherwise, to him, he retained, or sent them to the office to be forwarded to their address. Owing to this plan, the greater number of the letters sent in during six years from Europe, were intercepted, no doubt, because they were written in a language which the Dictator did not understand; and the same thing happened to several Englishmen, pro-

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bably for the same reason*. This violation of the confidence of letters was so well known, that few took the trouble of sealing them.

Amongst the other measures of police, there are several deserving of notice. Some are meant to regulate the prices of provisions, but they are rather hurtful than beneficial. The price of flour having risen in 1821, the Dictator fixed a *maximum* for its sale, which was lower than the price paid for it at Buenos Ayres; the year following, he did the same thing with regard to the cattle brought to be slaughtered. On the other hand, when he opened a commercial communication with the Portuguese, he fixed a *minimum*, under which the tobacco and tea of Paraguay were not allowed to be sold. The *fiel-executor*, charged with the police of the markets of the capital, following his example, determines every day, and in the most arbitrary manner, the prices of provisions. Another police measure consists in collecting, in the

* The Dictator did not begin studying English until the arrival of a vessel from Buenos Ayres, provided with an English charter. Unwilling to put confidence in the translation that might have been made of this document for him, he procured an English Grammar and Dictionary, with which he endeavoured to make out its meaning. Until he had succeeded in this task, the ship was not allowed to unload.

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different circles, all the horses and horned cattle that have strayed from their pastures, and adding them to the herds belonging to the state. In vain the owners claim these animals, all of which they are able to recognise by a particular mark—they are never restored. Almost every year, the Dictator orders a massacre of dogs to take place in the capital. On these occasions, bands of soldiers, armed with sabres and pikes, scour the streets, and the environs of the city, enter the houses, and search even the most private apartments, lest any of these animals should escape them. The commandants, who take a delight in imitating their chief in all his vexatious inventions, carry on a war of extermination against the dogs in the interior. It must be allowed, that in a country where dogs, from the great facility of finding food, voluntarily desert their masters, become wild, and commit ravages amongst the flocks, some measures must be adopted to prevent their too great multiplication; but, at least, an exception should be made in favour of those that are kept in remote and detached houses, where they are necessary to keep off the wild beasts. Some persons pretend, that the orders for these massacres are given whenever a dog has had the temerity

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to cross the path of the Dictator, or bark after his horse. However, the dogs kept on the state farms are not only respected by the commandants, but they are sometimes regaled with the carcase of a cow, sent to them by the Dictator.

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CHAP. V.

Military Force—Manner of Recruiting—Discipline—Warlike Materiel.

After having shewn the manner in which justice is administered, and the system of police in Paraguay, I come next to the military organization of the country. The armed force is composed of regular troops, to the number of five thousand, and twenty thousand militia. Under the Spanish government there existed only this last species of troops, and even these were so badly organized, as to be almost totally inefficient. It is only since the revolution that Paraguay can boast of a military establishment, which owes its constitution and vigour to the Dictator, of whose power it is the most firm support.

The troops of the line are chiefly composed of cavalry: there are, at least, in name, hussars, light-horse, lancers, horse-grenadiers, and dragoons, who all do duty dismounted. These different corps are generally distinguished from each other

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only by the colour of the facings; the arms, consisting of a sabre, pistols, and carbine, are the same for all, with the exception, however, of the lancers, who have lances instead of carbines. The infantry, which was always limited in number, is now reduced to a few companies of light troops, in consequence of the grenadiers, who formed the Dictator's guard, having been disbanded for neglect of duty*. When this infantry is on the march, each man is provided with a horse, as is the custom throughout the greater part of South America. This transformation of infantry into cavalry, is made with little difficulty in a country where horses are so numerous, and where every one from childhood is in the habit of riding on horseback. The corps of artillery is small and badly organized; however, when we quitted Paraguay, the Dictator had nearly completed a park and barrack, with a view to improve this branch of the service. Besides these troops, he had formed in 1821, a body of young lads, from

* The serjeant of the guard allowed an officer to enter the Dictator's apartments, without having been announced. The Dictator was so indignant, that he drove the guard away in the most ignominious manner, and replaced it, for the moment, by a negro boy twelve years of age, whom he armed with a sabre, and ordered him to cut down any one that should attempt to enter.

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twelve to fourteen years of age, who were assimilated in every respect to the other soldiers, and who, moreover, were instructed in writing and arithmetic. The Dictator's intention in this, was to create a kind of military school; but these youths having turned out profligate and turbulent characters, he became disgusted with the project, and neglected supplying the places of those who were drafted into the other troops.

None but whites are received into the troops of the line; nevertheless, in 1824, a body of 600 Mulattos was raised, who now form the corps of lancers, commanded by whites. Every native of Paraguay must enter the service as a private soldier, and it is only at the end of several years, and after having gone through all the inferior grades, that the Dictator appoints them to the rank of officer.

The general uniform is a blue coat with facings, the colour of which varies, according to the nature of the service; white trowsers, a round hat, and braiding upon the seams of the back, distinguish the cavalry from the infantry. The lancers alone are an exception to this rule. Their uniform consists of a white coat, not buttoned, a red waist-

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coat*, white trowsers, and a foraging cap of the same colour as the waistcoat. It is true that the Dictator has had made for the dragoons and horse-grenadiers, two or three hundred splendid uniforms; but which are to be worn only on state days, and when they mount guard at his residence; at all other times they are carefully locked up in the stores.

The cockade is tri-colour, namely, red, blue, and white. These colours, adopted in many of the new states of South America, are also displayed upon the standards, banners and drums, together with the motto, *Libertad o la muerte* (liberty or death). The pay of the soldier is fixed at six piastres a month, but he only, in fact, receives one piastre and a half, or two piastres,—the remainder being retained for rations and clothing. The pay of the officers is from sixteen to thirty piastres. The Mulattos alone receive no pay, they are merely fed and clothed by government.

The troops are divided into companies of from sixty to a hundred men; these are neither battalions nor regiments. Each company has

* These waistcoats were made with the red hangings found in the churches of the missions, and which the Dictator thus turned to some account.

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three or four non-commissioned officers, and it is commanded by a lieutenant or ensign; the Dictator being unwilling, from motives of economy, to appoint officers of a higher rank; but he confers on these officers temporary commissions, such as commandant of a barrack, or *subdelegado* of the missions. Half a dozen individuals, at most, and of whom only one is now employed, have received the brevet rank of captain. Every day the troops are put through their manual exercises and evolutions; but the cavalry manœuvre on horseback during the three winter months only; the rest of the year the horses are turned into the state pastures, and allowed to roam at large. Nevertheless, as the natives of Paraguay are excellent horsemen, they soon break in, and render fit for service, these half wild horses. The Dictator ignominiously discharges any trooper who should allow himself to be thrown by a horse, even one that has never before been backed. Some military men, who had served at Buenos Ayres and in Banda Oriental, were the first instructors of the troops, aided by the Dictator, who sometimes put them through their evolutions; but, of late years, he leaves this task to the officers who have been

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since formed. However, he is generally present at the cavalry exercises; sometimes takes the command, and putting himself sword in hand at the head of a squadron, leads on a charge with boyish pleasure. Should the officers betray any want of military skill, he publicly loads them with the epithets of *barbaros* and *brutos*. The greater part of the troops are stationed in the capital, where they occupy five large barracks, two of which are for infantry, two for cavalry, and the fifth for the artillery. Three of these barracks were formerly convents: another division of the troops is spread over the frontier, and forms the garrisons of the towns and most important fortresses either upon the Parana or the Paraguay. There are, besides, a few hundred men, a kind of veterans who are on unlimited furlough, but ready to march when called upon.

When the Dictator wishes to raise new troops or recruit those already existing, he dispatches officers with orders to the commandants to assemble all the young men in their circles. Of these, the officers choose the handsomest and most serviceable, and march them to the capital. They are careful, however, not to select those young men who belong to families of any note.

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The time of service is not fixed, and a full discharge is seldom or ever granted unless on account of bodily infirmity.

A very strict discipline is enforced with regard to all that concerns the service. The slightest fault is punished with the stocks, or whipping. The mulattos particularly are treated with unheard-of cruelty. The officers are punished by degradation and dismissal. On the other hand, the soldier, when not on duty, is at liberty to do almost whatever he pleases; no matter how ill he may conduct himself towards the citizens, he is seldom reprimanded. The soldiers lead a most licentious life, in which the Dictator blushes not to encourage them, whenever the whim takes him to converse familiarly with them; and yet if any cause resulting from their profligate habits should render them unfit for service, he orders them fifty lashes, and sends them, for several months, to the public prison.

The appearance of the troops, though they go through their exercises and evolutions with tolerable precision, is not very martial. They have had no good models upon which to form themselves; and though Doctor Francia has taken immense pains to supply the place of these

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models, it is but too evident from his deportment that he has been more accustomed to wield the pen than the sword. He has, however, succeeded in inspiring them with an *esprit de corps*, in consequence of which the different companies display considerable spirit of emulation, and seek to surpass each other in the practice of their military duties. Owing to this feeling, the Dictator may confidently reckon upon their fidelity, as long as they are employed in maintaining the internal tranquillity of the country; but in case of an attack upon Paraguay by a foreign force, amounting even to no more than three or four thousand men, I have no hesitation in saying, that such troops would oppose but a very feeble resistance. For, without taking into consideration the circumstances that they have never seen a shot fired, and that their officers have had very little instruction and possess no influence over the soldiers—they have entered the service by compulsion, and dread the Dictator too much to feel any cordial attachment towards him. It is even probable that were they to be supported by a foreign army, they, as well as the rest of the population, would be delighted to get rid of their chief.

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With regard to the militia, the name of every free man, without distinction of race, capable of bearing arms, and arrived at the age of seventeen, is inserted upon the rolls. However, as in recruiting for the regular troops, and from the same spirit of distrust, all those, who are distinguished by fortune or education, are excepted. The militia of each *partido* (portion of a circle), forms a company, commanded by a lieutenant or veteran captain; they wear no uniform, are never reviewed, nor do they ever assemble to be drilled. When a division is called out on occasional duty, each man brings whatever weapon he can procure:—a fowling-piece, a sabre, a lance, &c.; and those who possess none of these, are armed with pikes. The Dictator employs this militia in doing duty in the greater number of stations upon the river Paraguay, and in reinforcing the posts of regular troops upon the Parana; a service, which lasts from eight days to two months, and which falls to the same man's lot several times in the year. In the interior, they are employed as orderly soldiers by the commandants, and do the duty of gendarmes. The militia, even when on service, receive no pay, and are entitled to no rations, unless when conjointly serving with the regular troops.

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It is evident, that in case of an invasion of Paraguay, such a militia would be completely useless; the more particularly, as those who compose it, are interested, as citizens, in the downfall of a government that bears so heavily upon them.

The *materiel* of the army collected in the arsenal, which was formerly a part of the Jesuit's college, consists of more than twelve thousand muskets and carabines, as many sabres and pairs of pistols, a great number of lances, and a certain quantity of ammunition, but not in proportion to the arms: there are in the capital, and at the posts upon the frontiers, from fifty to sixty iron and brass cannons. To this *materiel* of war, might be added, ten little brigantines, and a half dozen gun boats, but they are without crews.

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CHAP. VI.

Finances—Sources of the public Revenue.

As to the sinews of war—the finances—I can form no idea of the amount of the revenues and charges of the state. Who would have dared to draw aside the veil with which the Dictator thinks proper to cover, more particularly than any other, this part of the administration? All I can do is, to point out the sources of these revenues, and the public services to which they are applied.

The *personnel* of the administration is composed of a minister and his two secretaries, a *vista*, or inspector of customs, and about twenty *alcabaleros* or receivers of sale duty, of whom there is, with some exceptions, one for each circle. The minister of finance, as I have already mentioned, is nothing more than a principal clerk. He can do nothing of his own authority; for the smallest payment, the most trifling delivery of stores, he is obliged to have the authority of the Dictator.—He is guardian of the public treasury, chief of the

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customs, state store-keeper, and receiver and pay-master-general. The Dictator calls upon him for his accounts at indeterminate periods, and for each department separately, so that there is never any general account. He enters into the most minute details, and goes over all the additions, to satisfy himself of their correctness*.

The revenues of the state arise from tithes, a tax upon shops and store-houses in the capital, an import and export duty, the sale duty, stamps, postage of letters, fines, confiscations, *droit d'aubaine*, and the produce of the national domains.

The tithes, and the taxes upon shops and store-houses in the capital, formerly belonged to the *cabildo* of Assumption. They were applied to municipal purposes, to the support of the canons of the cathedral, and formed a part of the bishop's revenue; but for several years back, the Dictator

* It is not alone, upon the examination of the accounts, that the Dictator bestows such particular attention, but also upon all the different branches of administration. He himself selects the articles purchased by government, and examines, personally, and in the greatest detail, the works carrying on for the account of the state. On one occasion, taking a pair of scissors, chalk, and a piece of cloth, he proved to a tailor, that he must have cheated him of a certain quantity of cloth; after which he sent him to prison.

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has ordered the produce of the tithes to be paid into the state treasury, to which he has joined that of the *cabildo*.

With the exception of the taxes upon shops and houses in the capital, all the others existed in the time of the Spaniards; but they were not rigorously collected, and very frequently their payment was eluded. As, besides this, the national domains were so badly managed, that they returned nothing, the province of Paraguay cost the Spanish monarchs much more than they derived from it.

The tithes, at present, form the most abundant source of the public revenue; they are levied upon all species of agricultural produce, upon flocks and herds, and even upon poultry. The government usually puts them up to auction in each *partido*, so that they are farmed by private individuals. The first purchasers resell them in smaller lots to others, and so on through a series; so that after each intermediate purchaser has had his profit, the last of all—he who collects the tithe, exacts it in the most rigorous manner, and will not abate a chicken's claw of his right*.

* The same system prevails in Ireland.

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During the early period of the Spanish domination, the tithes belonged to the cathedral of Assumption; but their produce being insignificant, the chapter obtained from the government, a certain yearly allowance in lieu of them. When, afterwards, the tithes became one of the principal sources of the revenue of the province, the chapter endeavoured, but in vain, to get them back again. The tax upon shops, which is payed throughout Paraguay, is from two to six piastres a month; that upon store-houses, which does not extend beyond the capital, is from four to sixteen piastres. These taxes were imposed by the Dictator, for the purpose of carrying on the public works.

The import and export duties can be received only at the custom-house of Assumption. All vessels coming up the Paraguay are prohibited, under the penalty of confiscation, from landing any part of their cargoes on the way. On arriving at the capital, an officer of customs is sent on board, and remains until the merchandize has been removed to the custom-house to be examined. With regard to the merchandize brought to Itapua, the invoices accompanying them are sent to the capital, where the duty to be paid is

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fixed. The duty upon all sorts of goods, without distinction, is 19 per cent. ad valorem; but the inspector charged with examining them, calculates the duty, not on the invoice price or first cost, but on the retail price, at which it is presumed they may be sold, and thus, in fact, he raises the duty to 28 per cent. To this enormous import duty, is still to be added 4 per cent. of *alcabala* or sale duty, which is levied upon all articles; so that the merchant has to add 32 per cent. to the first cost of his goods, independently of any profit. The duty is estimated in so exact a manner, that pieces of cloth are frequently opened and measured in the custom-house. The *vista's* calculation is always laid before the Dictator, who augments or diminishes at his pleasure, the valuation put on certain articles. There is no prohibition to the importation of any article whatever, not even those which are the natural produce of the country, such as sugar, tobacco, &c.; and even the duty upon these articles is not heavier than it is upon others.

Besides these duties, foreign merchandize is liable to still more oppressive conditions. From every cargo that arrives, the Dictator selects whatever part of it he may wish to have; the amount of

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which is not generally paid until some years afterwards, and then at a price much lower than that upon which the duties were calculated.

The articles for exportation, which are the herb of Paraguay, tobacco, sweet-meats, rum, tanned hides, tapioca, and timber for building, pay a duty of nearly 9 per cent. The exportation of gold, silver, and raw hides, is prohibited. The *alcabala*, which is 4 per cent., is levied upon all merchandize sold by wholesale or retail, as also upon all objects disposed of by one private individual to another; no sale being valid, unless the terms are taken down in writing before the local authorities. Private persons observe this formality, and pay the duty only when the objects are of some considerable value, such as slaves, herds of cattle, houses, lands, &c. Agricultural produce is not liable to the *alcabala*, unless at Assumption, where a duty or toll of one real or sixty-two cents, is taken upon every cart load of provisions that comes to the market: a very heavy tax upon the merchants and traders, particularly from the manner in which it is levied. As it is impossible to ascertain the quantity of merchandize sold by retail, certain merchants are charged to keep an account of all the sales in bulk, and to determine thereby,

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at the end of the year, in conjunction with the minister, the amount of duty which each merchant is liable to pay on his resales: this estimate is also submitted to the Dictator, who, if he does not find it sufficiently high, augments it. This duty is levied on the same articles every time they change hands, so that upon those which are sold in the interior it has often been paid six times over.

The stamp-duty returns, annually, a considerable sum. There are two descriptions of stamps—a large and a small one. Each impression from the first stamp costs six piastres or thirty francs, it is employed only for foreign passports and licenses. The second, which costs two reals or one franc twenty-five cents, is used for contracts, passports for the interior, law papers and petitions addressed to the Dictator, the commandants and alcabildos.

After what has been already mentioned of the post-office, or rather of the tax upon letters, it cannot be expected to figure amongst the resources of the public revenue.

This is not the case, however, with regard to fines, and particularly to confiscations,—one half of the fines inflicted by the alcaldis and commandants belongs to these functionaries, the other half,

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and the entire amount of those imposed by the Dictator, are paid to the state. These latter are few in number, but are never less in amount than a thousand piastres. The confiscations, the greater number of which were decreed against the conspirators of 1821, not only brought considerable sums into the treasury, but also augmented the public domain, by some of the best situated farms, the most valuable country houses, and several thousand horses and head of cattle.

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CHAP. VII.

Other sources of public Revenue—the droit d'aubaine, *National Property-fines, Confiscations, &c.—Economy in the public Charges.*

THE *droit d'aubaine* is put in force with the utmost rigour. The state is the heir of all foreigners who die without legitimate children, born in Paraguay: therefore, the wife cannot inherit the husband's property, nor the son that of his father, unless he happens to have been born in the country. This law is rendered still more revolting by the manner in which it is executed. As soon as any foreigner, in which class are ranked all persons not natives of Paraguay, and consequently, all Spaniards, becomes dangerously ill, those about him or the proprietor of the house where he resides, are required to give notice to the local magistrate. The latter repairs immediately to the house, and obliges the sick man to declare upon oath, the amount of his property, without even deducting his debts. An inventory is then

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made of all his goods and chattels, which are put under seal, with the exception of whatever ready money he may have, which the magistrate takes away with him. If the furniture in the sick room be of any considerable value, the patient, though he be in the very agony of death, is removed into another apartment, where he is left with merely those articles which are strictly indispensable. Should his death not immediately ensue, he is furnished day by day from his own purse, with mere necessaries; and after his decease, the magistrate takes possession of the house and all that remains, frequently before the eyes of the widow and relations, to whom there is not left even the means of paying the expenses of interment. Several Spaniards, by whose death the state became possessed of considerable property, have been buried with the produce of a charitable collection: it was, therefore, considered a particular mark of favour from the Dictator, to have re-imbursed us the funeral expenses of a gentleman of our acquaintance, Mr. Joseph Sibibal, a native of Savoy, to whom we had rendered the last sad offices.

The national domains of Paraguay extend over almost the half of its territory; they consist of

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pasturage lands and forests, which, under the Spanish domination, were neither sold nor granted to private individuals,—of the Jesuit missions, possessions of other religious corporations, and a great number of country houses, and farming establishments, confiscated by the Dictator.

As the agents of the Spanish government, and indeed the governors themselves, looked upon their places only as the means of enriching themselves, they in general sought only to turn to their own advantage the existing state of things, and never thought of augmenting the property of the country, by the creation of new establishments. They therefore abandoned the uncultivated lands to the care of nature, or the first occupant, and destroyed by their exactions, the establishments confided to them*. The Dictator, on the contrary, has endeavoured since the com-

* This observation is particularly applicable to the Jesuit mission, where, for instance, the little *bourgade* of Santa-Rosa alone, possessed sixty years ago, upwards of eighty thousand head of cattle, but which number was reduced at the breaking out of the revolution to ten thousand. The church of this mission was so richly adorned, that after being successively plundered by a viceroy of Buenos Ayres, several governors of Paraguay, and some of the minor authorities, it still had a quantity of gold and silver ornaments sufficient to attract the rapacity of Doctor Francia: it is even still the richest and most beautiful temple in Paraguay.

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mencement of his sway, to render the domains productive, and has, by so doing, created a branch of revenue, which aided by time, and a wise government, may be found sufficient of itself alone, for all the wants of the state. He has let a part of these lands at a very moderate rent*, and for an unlimited period, under the single condition, that they shall be properly cultivated, or turned into pasturage. On other parts of these lands, he has formed large farms, where thousands of cattle and horses are bred. These supply his cavalry with horses and his troops with provisions; besides which, they also furnish for the consumption of the capital, several droves (each containing fifty or sixty head) of oxen in the year. For these, the Dictator requires the highest price in the market, and will allow no one to undersell him. He has also established yards for the tanning of ox and horse hides, which are employed in the equipment of the troops, or sold to merchants. These farming establishments are peculiar objects of his solicitude; and every month, the master herdsmen

*I have seen a portion of land, a quarter of a league in circumference, the rent paid for which was only a piastre and a half, whilst we paid more than double that sum for a cottage, a few yards square, that served us for shelter during a hunting excursion.

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are obliged to make a detailed report concerning them. When one of these herdsmen is closeted with the Dictator, no other person is allowed to be announced.

However, it has been only within the last few years, that the Dictator has turned his attention towards the missions; probably because he was not the founder of them. Until then, they were, as under the Spaniards, abandoned to the managers, who omitted no opportunity of enriching themselves at the expense of the state and the Indians*. But, in 1823, he ordered a detailed estimate of the possession of each settlement to be made out. At the same time he contracted the power of the managers, and forbad them to

* The condition of the Guarini Indians, who are still in the missions, is inferior to that of the slaves. In the time of the Jesuits, these Indians, though in the same state of servitude and ignorance as at present, were, however, well fed and clothed; and on the holidays, which were very numerous, they were amused with processions, dancing, and music. These reverend fathers contrived to make them forget the state of dependence in which they held them, and profited by their labour, at the same time that they ameliorated their condition. But since the expulsion of the Jesuits, the managers, who succeeded them, have been chiefly occupied in pillaging the settlements, overworking the Indians, and rendering their fate still more wretched, by the utter destitution in which they leave them.

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make purchases or sales, without his express permission. Since then, he has employed the Indians for the immediate account of government, either in manufacturing cotton cloths for the clothing of the troops, or as labourers and hewers of wood for the public works.

Amongst the public charges, the maintenance of the troops, and providing *the materiel of war*, occupy the first place. But a considerable degree of economy in this branch of expenditure, results from the system of receiving many articles in kind, and from the prices at which they are bought. Thus the butcher's meat, furnished by the state pasturages, is taken at the market price, though the hides still remain the property of government. The materials for clothing the troops, such as saddle-cloths, cotton stuffs, &c., are also procured in a very economical manner, in consequence of the onerous conditions to which foreign merchandize is subjected. Arms and ammunition are also bought at a low rate, as they are frequently paid for in native produce, which is always estimated higher than the trade price. Another source of economy consists in withholding the pay of the soldiers when in hospital, or of those sent to the frontier, who are not to receive it

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until their return; so that in case of their death, in the interval, it is so much gained by the state.

The salaries of the functionaries, such as the minister of finance, the secretaries, &c., are very moderate; the commandants of circles and the alcalde, have no salary but their fees of office. The bishop, since his mind has become deranged, receives no income; and the canons of the chapter are merely paid certain sums on account. The remainder of the clergy, who have never been paid by the state, are supported by voluntary contribution, to one quarter of which the bishop has a right. All the artisans in the employment of government, such as gun and sword makers, saddlers, shoemakers, and tailors, are badly paid; the Dictator being always in arrears with them. The public works being carried on by prisoners, or by means of forced labour*, cost the state but

* These *corvees* save the Dictator considerable sums. His agents employ, in the name of the state, or as they say in America, in the name of the country, not only for the public service but for their own purposes, the horses, oxen, carts, slaves, and workmen of private persons, without the slightest remuneration. I have seen the former *subdelegado*, Zorilla, take possession of a coach and six horses belonging to one of my acquaintances, for the purpose of conveying him from one mission to another. Whoever should dare to refuse the most trifling demand made by an agent of government in the name of the country, would be looked upon as a bad citizen and severely punished.

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little; the master workmen alone receive salaries.

Notwithstanding all this economy, made at the expense of justice, and the right of property; notwithstanding the order introduced by the Dictator into the finances, he cannot have accumulated a considerable treasure. In a country so distant from the sea coast, where industry and commerce are at so low an ebb, all articles brought from foreign countries, must be excessively dear; and even though the government pays only half their value for the objects which it purchases, the public exigencies are still probably sufficient to absorb the entire of the revenue. The greatest sacrifices are made by the Dictator for war stores—as he well knows, that in case of an invasion, all the channels through which he might procure them, would be closed.

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CHAP. VIII.

The Clergy—their Manners—The Dictator suppresses the Monks, becomes head of the Church, and reforms the public Worship.

As the Dictator governs the church as well as the state, it may not be irrelevant to say a few words upon the clergy of Paraguay. When we arrived in the country, this body was composed of a bishop, with his vicar-general; a chapter; a certain number of priests, and five monasteries, three of which, those of the Dominicans, the Cordeliers, and the Fathers of Mercy, were within the walls of the capital. The Recollets had a convent at the distance of half a league from Assumption, and a second convent of Cordeliers, was situated at Villa Rica. The entire number of the monks never exceeded forty. The bishop, in consequence of the derangement of his intellect, has ceased his functions. He was a Spanish monk of the order of the Franciscans, who had never given in his adhesion to the revolution. Doctor Francia,

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when consul, had, in vain, sought to make him change his opinions upon this point: the bishop was obstinate, and has continued so ever since. The Dictator, irritated by this resistance, revenged himself by a series of persecutions; the first of which was, taking away the canopy in the church, which surmounted the bishop's chair. But the principal attack on the episcopal authority, was made on the occasion of a marriage of one of the Dictator's relations, and to which he was averse, because the woman was a Mulatto—the bishop dispensed with the publication of the banns, and the parties were married clandestinely. When Doctor Francia was informed of this marriage, he declared it illegal and void, and revived the ancient prohibitions against the marriages of whites and Mulattos, as also the regulations relative to the publication of banns. This gave the finishing blow to the unfortunate prelate; his mind, which had been a little deranged since the commencement of the revolution, became now completely bewildered. The Dictator, however, contrived to persuade him to transfer his authority to the vicar-general, who was one of his creatures; in this manner he succeeded in combining in his own person, the new governments, temporal and spiritual.

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The clergy, both secular and regular, were, with few exceptions, bigoted to excess, and plunged in all the irregularities that generally accompany superstition. The curates and the monks lived publicly in a state of concubinage, and so far from being ashamed of so doing, they were known to boast of it. The prior of the Dominicans, amongst others, told me, that he was the father of twenty-two children by different mothers. The Dictator, seeing how fatal such manners were to the influence of the clergy, left them at liberty to act as they thought proper, merely threatening them, from time to time, to do away with their vow of celibacy. However, when he suppressed the religious corporations, he took care to specify all the disorders which induced him to come to this resolution. In the decree, by which he abolished them, he expressed the utmost contempt and dislike for the monks; and in order to still further debase them, he dictated the formula they were to make use of in demanding secularization, and by which they acknowledged themselves guilty of all the vices inherent in their institution. A Spanish monk having, at the instigation of the vicar-general, pronounced it first, all the rest were obliged to follow his example. The secularization

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itself, was a kind of mockery. On the day fixed for the ceremony, each monk came to the house of the vicar-general, clothed in the habit of his order, beneath which he wore the priest's cassock. After taking an oath of fidelity to the Dictator, the vicar-general ordered the whole of them to throw off their monastic habits, and then sent them away as Neophytes, in the dress of secular priests.

Since the bishop allowed himself to be replaced by his vicar-general, in consequence of which the Dictator has become head of the church, the clergy have been subjected to civil authority. They no longer enjoy that impunity, which from the testimony of history, appears to have been so often fatal to Paraguay. The least opposition to government, the slightest transgression of the laws, conducts the priest, as well as the layman, to prison. The Dictator nominates or dismisses the *cures*, according to his good pleasure. He has even gone farther, and introduced several changes in the mode of worship. He has, as I have already mentioned, prohibited all nocturnal ceremonies, and all processions, except those of the Fête Dieu. Wishing also to diminish the number of holidays, so injurious to public prosperity, parti-

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cularly in a climate, which of itself renders the people but too much inclined to indolence, he compelled all those in the pay of government, to work upon these days, with the exception of the Sabbath. When he suppressed the convents, he at the same time forbade the formation of any religious confraternities. The grotesque imitations of the Passion, during Holy Week; as also several other pretended religious ceremonies, such as the Feast of the Ass, &c., have been discontinued in the greatest part of Paraguay, in consequence of the ridicule thrown upon them by the Dictator.

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CHAP. IX.

Public Education—Elementary Schools—Boarding Schools.

In Paraguay, as well as in the rest of South America, the education of youth was formerly entrusted exclusively to the monks. There were no schools, except in the convents. In 1783, a college for the study of theology, was founded at Assumption, in favour of those whose means did not allow them to repair to the university of Cordova; but it was only under the last governors of Paraguay, and particularly under Don Lazaro de Ribera, that elementary schools, in which lay-masters taught reading, writing, and arithmetic, under the inspection of the cures, were established in all the districts.

The revolution did nothing, at least directly, for education. In 1822, the Dictator suppressed the college of theology, saying; *Minerva duerme, quando vela Marte;* when Mars awakes, Minerva goes to sleep. But his motive, as he afterwards

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explained it, was, that as it became impossible for the young theologians, in consequence of the bishop's incapacity from mental disorder, to receive ordination, the country would become burthened with a number of half-lettered clowns, who, too proud to return to the plough, would become bad writers, and worse advocates. He allowed the elementary schools to exist, but took no steps to improve them. At present, as in former times, parents are bound to send their male children * to these schools: but there are no such institutions for females. It is therefore a rare occurrence, in a country where no printing press exists, to find a free man who cannot read and write.

Within a short time back, several private seminaries have been established in the capital, in

* When the distance is considerable, which is frequently the case, the children, even those only six years old, ride on horseback to the school. The catechism is the only book taught them. They follow in these schools, though unconsciously, the Lancasterian system; for the elder scholars teach the younger, and all learn to write by means of wooden tablets covered with a resinous powder, upon which the letters or figures are traced with a wooden pen. When it becomes necessary to efface these, in order to commence another exercise, the tablet is again powdered, each scholar carrying a little bag of resinous powder for that purpose.

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which the youth of both sexes receive a tolerably regular education, until the age of fourteen. The Dictator, though far from encouraging these institutions, has not, however, as yet, thrown any obstacles in their way.

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CHAP. X.

Character of the Natives of Paraguay—In what manner the despotism of Doctor Francia has modified it—Advantages, which counterbalance the evils inflicted by the Dictator upon his Country.

THE influence which so extraordinary a government as that of Doctor Francia must necessarily have upon the character and manners of the people subjected to it, was the more sensibly felt by the inhabitants of Paraguay, on account of the civilization of their country being yet in its infancy. The natives of Paraguay are gifted with considerable natural talents, and are of a mild, hospitable, and generous disposition: but, careless and unsteady, they are as easily hurried towards what is evil, as induced to follow what is good. Though not possessed of the ardour of the inhabitants of the torrid zone, they support the greatest fatigue with courage and perseverance, but at other times, they will remain whole months in a state of the most com-

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plete inaction. Isolated, as they are, by the situation of their country as well as by their language *, they have always been distinguished from the other Creoles, by their national spirit. They are proud of their ancestors, as having been the founders of the first establishment that was formed in South America, and have always shewn a readiness to defend their rights against the encroachments of the government, and even of the clergy. Such a character, under a wise administration, would have been cultivated with the greatest advantage; but the Spanish government was more occupied in repressing, than encouraging its energies. Aided by priests and monks, the government kept the people of Paraguay in the most profound ignorance. Their language, moreover, was ill adapted for the propagation of knowledge amongst them. On the other hand, the fertility of the soil and a tropical climate, inclined them too powerfully to indulge in that idleness and inaction, which generally bring the

* In Paraguay, the conquerors have adopted the language of the conquered Only half a century ago, the Guarini was so generally spoken, that the greater part of the men, and all the female Creoles, were completely ignorant of Spanish. Even at present, numbers of the women in the country parts, speak no language but that of the Indians.

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whole train of vices after them. Hence it was that the ambition of a native of Paraguay was soon limited to the possession of a fine and well-caparisoned horse, and the measure of his felicity was complete when he could, after taking a part in a procession, pass the rest of the day and night in gambling.

Such was the state of civilization, when the revolution broke out. It is not, therefore, surprising that it should have been quickly followed by anarchy; which, however, owing to the peculiarity of the national character, was much less violent, than in several other provinces. Nevertheless, it is beyond a doubt, that Paraguay would have experienced the same fate as *Banda Oriental* and *Entre Rios*, had not Doctor Francia succeeded in seizing the reins of government.

I am inclined to think that, at first, his intentions were good; at least his public life, before the revolution, and the use which he, in the beginning, made of his power, would lead to that belief. But soon hurried on by the love of sway, and giving way to his suspicious and violent temper, he strayed from the right path and became a true tyrant; at the same time that he justified his conduct to himself by the maxim, that liberty

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should be in proportion to civilization; and that to a people who felt not the want of it, it could prove only injurious.

The system of terror, by which he supported this maxim, produced various effects, according to the social positions of the different classes of society. The families of greatest consideration amongst the Creoles—those who had the greatest reason to fear the Dictator, retired to their country houses or farms, and sought security in a solitary and obscure life. The Spaniards, for the most part merchants, after having been ruined by contributions and fines, devoted themselves, though unwillingly, to agricultural pursuits; and found a ground for resignation in the belief, that the Dictator was a scourge sent by heaven to punish them for their sins. Other persons, as if struck with stupor, abandoned themselves to their fate, and fell into a state of inaction that soon plunged their families in misery. But it was principally upon the lower ranks of the people, that the Dictator exercised the most dangerous influence. The men of this class, looking upon themselves as the supporters of a government, that raised them to the first employments, became arrogant, at the same time that

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they displayed the greatest servility towards their patron. To ingratiate themselves with him, they turned informers. The system of espionage now became the order of the day, and it succeeded in banishing every kind of confidence, as well as every generous and hospitable quality from the people. The arbitrary and iniquitous acts daily committed in the name of the state, weakened in the minds of the people every sentiment of justice; whilst the executions which took place every day, diminished their horror at the shedding of innocent blood.

The ruin of commerce, was another source of corruption. Formerly, in Paraguay, trade was carried on with a degree of probity and simplicity, rarely to be met with: a mere verbal agreement sufficed for the most important transactions. But the traders, no longer able to obtain lawful profits, had recourse to fraud and cunning. The farmers, on their part, who bought on credit from the merchants, having become unable to satisfy their demands, owing to the low price of the agricultural produce, which they were to deliver in payment, were likewise obliged to resort to fraud in order to clear themselves.

And lastly, another cause of demoralization,

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was the reprehensible and indecent manner in which the Dictator habitually spoke of religion, together with his indulgence towards the depraved manners of the clergy, the civil officers, and the soldiers, whose example was but too generally adopted.

It must, however, be allowed, that these evils were not altogether without their advantage. If, on the one hand, the morality of the mass of the people degenerated; on the other, civilization advanced amongst the upper classes. The inquisition, and the influence of the priests, being once destroyed, sounder ideas took place of old prejudices. Since the revolution, books were allowed to be freely imported; consequently, a taste for reading, and with it instruction, has begun to spread itself, at least, amongst the youthful part of the community; for as to those advanced in life, the greater number still continue to draw all their knowledge from the *Christian Year*, and the *Flower of the Saints*, the two best works formerly known in Paraguay. In fine, the presence of those foreigners, who have been detained for several years in the capital, has contributed to inculcate more rational notions into the peoples minds, and to facilitate the adoption of manners more in har-

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mony with the age. It must be remarked, that the women shew a greater disposition to acquire information, than the men, to whom they are, generally speaking, superior in intellectual faculties. Gifted with great penetration, and accustomed, even in the best families, to occupy themselves usefully, they gladly spend a part of their time in reading, and contrive, either in this way, or by means of conversation, to attain acquirements, in which the men participate, only, as it may be said, through their intervention. In fine, the administration of Doctor Francia offers to Paraguay a prospect, more or less remote, of compensation for the evils which he has inflicted upon her. In the first place, by having formed a military establishment, capable of securing to her the respect of her neighbours, and by introducing order into the state of the finances, this man has proved to his countrymen, that they may become independent. Then, the two great resources of the country,—the forests of timber for building, and the herb of Paraguay, having been preserved untouched, agriculture having been considerably improved, and a spur having been given to the manufacturing industry of the country, Paraguay, when by some means or other she shall have

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recovered her liberty, may easily re-establish her commerce; and if she will but profit of the severe lesson she has received, she may advance rapidly towards that prosperity, to which her destinies call her*.

* On re-visiting at our return, the states bordering on the Parana, which we had passed through in going to Paraguay, we were enabled to make comparisons, which proved how much liberty is capable of producing under a wise administration. Until 1821, these states had been the theatre of war, either civil or defensive; four years of peace have sufficed to place them in the path of prosperity.

In 1819, Corrientes was half in ruins, and looked more like a deserted village, than an inhabited city. In 1825, we found the old houses rebuilt, and a great number of new ones erected; both of which displayed in their fitting up, not only comfort, but luxury. The population had considerably increased, commerce was in full activity, and agriculture flourishing. The satisfaction that beamed upon every face, and the degree of freedom with which political topics were discussed, made so much the more an agreeable impression upon us, as we had just quitted a country, where it was rare to see an unclouded brow, or to hear any body give utterance to his thoughts, in any way beyond a whisper. This city, moreover, owes, in part, its speedy re-establishment to the interruption of the trade with Paraguay; for since then, its inhabitants gave themselves up exclusively to the cultivation of tobacco, and the sugar-cane, and to the felling of wood for building—branches of industry, in which it would have been before impossible for them to have competed with their neighbours. We were also struck by the favourable changes in the little towns of Goya and Bajada: the inhabitants had particularly applied themselves to repairing the loss of their cattle,

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which had suffered so much from the devastation of Artigas, that an ox, not including the hide, for which we had in 1818 paid only a piastre and a half, cost us in 1825, thirty-two piastres. Santa Fe alone, owing to the frequent incursions of the Indians of Grand-Chaco, had not yet recovered itself. But it was Buenos Ayres particularly, which we had some difficulty in recognizing: the streets had been paved; public promenades laid out; and, as it may be said, a second city erected, by the addition of several stories to the houses; a market place, with several halls, and surrounded by a gallery, had just been completed. The animation of commerce was visible every where; a forest of masts covered the roadsted; the streets were filled with carts, conveying merchandize, and on every side were seen stores and workshops. Several establishments for the instruction of youth had been formed, and were in a prosperous condition. And looking to the literary resources to be found in it, we would have supposed, that it was quite a European city. The dress, manners, and customs were also European, and the number of foreigners of all nations was so great, that it was difficult to say, which was the indigenous language. To give some idea of the increase of population, it may be sufficient to mention, that the number of French alone, established at Buenos Ayres, amounted, it was said, to six thousand.

These changes were chiefly brought about by the administration, which was chosen in 1821, and remained at the head of affairs, until the close of 1824. It was composed of Don Martin Rodriguez, governor; Don Bernardino Rivadavia, minister for the foreign and home department; Don Francisco Cruz, minister for the war and naval departments; and Don Manuel Garcia, minister of finance. It was this administration that checked the progress of anarchy; put an end to acts of revenge, and established law and order: it laid the basis of public credit; improved the administration of justice; formed elementary schools and colleges; proclaimed the liberty of the press, and freedom of conscience; suppressed the convents; placed the

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clergy under salutary control; instituted benefit societies; and in fact, placed every means of prosperity within the reach of the nation. The two last, and greatest results of this administration, have been the union of the provinces of the Rio de la Plata, into a federative state, and the recognition of the republics of South America, by the two principal maritime powers.

Without being unjust to the other members of this administration, all of whom are men of acknowledged merit, it may be confidently asserted, that to Mr. Rivadavia is due the greatest share of this praise; all the acts signed by him, bear testimony to the wisdom of his views, and to that elevation of sentiment and extent of knowledge which characterise this statesman; and what still more enhances his merit is, that he preferred doing good in a secondary rank, rather than in a superior one. To that supreme station, however, he has been recently called.

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CHAP. XI.

Details of the private Life of Doctor Francia, and Traits of his Character.

To finish the portrait of the principal subject of this work, I shall now give some particulars of his private life, and add several facts, for which I could not hitherto find a place, but which appear to me of a nature to characterise this extraordinary man.

I have already mentioned, that Doctor Francia, as soon as he found himself at the head of affairs, took up his residence in the habitation of the ancient governors of Paraguay. This edifice, which is one of the largest in Assumption, was erected by the Jesuits, a short time before their expulsion, and was destined as a house of retreat for laymen, who devoted themselves to certain spiritual exercises instituted by Saint Ignatius. This structure, the Dictator repaired and embellished, and detached it from other houses in

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the city, by interposing wide streets. Here he lives, with four slaves, a negro, one male, and two female mulattos, whom he treats with great mildness. The two men perform the functions of valet de chambre and groom. One of the two mulatto women is his cook, and the other takes care of his wardrobe. He leads a very regular life. The first rays of the sun very rarely find him in bed. As soon as he rises, the negro brings the chafing-dish, a kettle, and a pitcher of water, which is heated in his presence. The Dictator then prepares, with the greatest possible care, his *maté*, or Paraguay tea. Having taken this, he walks under the interior peristyle that looks upon the court, and smokes a cigar, which he first takes care to unroll, in order to ascertain that there is nothing dangerous in it, though it is his own sister who manufactures them for him. At six o'clock the barber arrives,—a filthy, ragged, and drunken mulatto; but the only member of the faculty in whom he confides. If the Dictator is in good humour, he chats with him, and often in this manner, makes use of him to prepare the public for his projects; this barber may be said to be his official *gazette*. He then puts on his dressing gown of printed

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calico*, and repairs to the outer peristyle, where he walks up and down, and receives, at the same time, those persons who are admitted to an audience. Towards seven, he enters his closet, where he remains until nine, when the officers and other functionaries come to make their reports, and receive his orders. At eleven o'clock the *fiel de fecho* (principal secretary), brings the papers which are to be submitted to his inspection, and writes from his dictation until noon, when all the officers retire, and Doctor Francia sits down to table. His dinner, which is extremely frugal, he always orders himself. When the cook returns from market, she deposits her provisions at the door of her master's closet. The Doctor then comes out, and selects what he wishes for his own use. After dinner he takes his *siesta*. On awakening he drinks his *matè*, and smokes a cigar, after taking the same precaution as that observed in the morning. From this, until four or five, he is occupied with business, when the escort to attend him on his promenade arrives. The barber then

* In imitation of the Dictator, the commandants and alcaldis, and in general all the government officers, wear similar dressing gowns, which they seem to consider their official costume, as they never lay them aside, not even when they ride out.

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enters and dresses his hair, while his horse is saddling. During his ride, the Doctor inspects the public works, and the barracks, particularly those of the cavalry, where a habitation is preparing for him. While riding, though surrounded by his escort, he is armed with a sabre, and a pair of double-barrelled pocket pistols. He returns home about nightfall, and sits down to study until nine, when he goes to supper, which consists of a roast pigeon and a glass of wine. If the weather be fine, he again walks under the peristyle, where he often remains till a very late hour. At ten o'clock he gives the watchword. On returning into the house, he fastens all the doors himself.

For several months in the year, he resides at the cavalry barrack, which is outside the city, about a quarter of a league from his usual residence; but then his manner of living is the same, except that he sometimes takes the pleasures of the chase. In the apartment that he occupies, there are always arms within his reach; pistols are hung upon the walls, or placed upon the table near him, and sabres, the greater number unsheathed, are to be found in every corner. This fear of assassination is also shewn in the etiquette prescribed at his audiences. The person admitted

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must not approach nearer to the Dictator than six paces, until he makes him a sign to advance; and even then he must always stop at a distance of three paces. His arms must be held close to his body, and his hands open and hanging down, so that it be evident that he has no concealed weapons*. The officers even are not permitted to enter his presence with swords by their sides. Nevertheless, he is pleased that the person addressing him, should look him straight in the face, and return prompt and positive answers. Speaking on this subject one day, as I was about opening the body of one of the natives, he told me to see if his countrymen had not one bone more than the usual number in their necks, which prevented them from holding up their heads and speaking out.

At the commencement of a conversation, he strives to intimidate; but if his first attack be met with firmness, he softens down, and finishes by conversing very agreeably; that is, when he is in

* At our first audience, as I was not acquainted with this etiquette, it happened that my hands were not in the position required by the Dictator, when he gruffly asked me if I was endeavouring to draw a poignard from my pocket. On my replying that such was not the custom amongst the Swiss, he became appeased, and continued the conversation.

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good humour. It is in such moments that you perceive him to be a man of great talent; he turns the conversation upon the most varied subjects, evinces considerable powers of mind, great penetration, and very extensive acquirements, for one who, it may be said, has never quitted Paraguay. Divested, himself, of the numberless prejudices with which his countrymen are imbued, he often makes them the subject of his wit, or sarcasm. During a conversation I once held with him, he turned into great ridicule the commandant and priest of Curuguaty, who had sent to him a poor woman in chains, and decorated with an immense rosary, whom they accused of being a sorceress. He then went into an account of the charms and spells chiefly used in Paraguay, pointing out the particular virtues ascribed to some of them, in effecting cures. He concluded thus: "You see what priests and religion are good for, they make us believe more in the devil than in God."

If the conscience of man be a sanctuary, which even history itself should respect, the same indulgence ought not be extended towards those open acts which betray the infidel principles of the chief of a government, particularly when he exercises so absolute a power as Doctor Francia. I therefore

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think myself warranted in stating, that for some time after his elevation, he had mass celebrated every Sunday in the chapel of one of his barracks, at which he was present; he also attended during holidays at the ceremonies in the cathedral, but he soon after gave up this practice, and in 1820 dismissed his almoner. Since that time he has taken no part in public worship, but has seized every occasion to shew his dislike to the established religion. To a commandant, who asked him for the image of a saint, that he might place a newly constructed fortress under its protection, he answered: "O people of Paraguay, how long will you remain idiots? When I was still a Catholic, I believed as you do, but now I know, that bullets are the best saints you can have on the frontiers." In the first audience we had of him, after having asked us of what religion we were, he said, "profess the religion that pleases you best, be Christians, Jews, or Mussulmans,—any thing but Atheists."

When the Dictator is attacked by an access of hypochondria, he either shuts himself up for several days, and leaves off public business altogether, or vents his ill humour on those around him. Civil functionaries, officers, soldiers—all are equally ill treated by him. It is during these

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paroxysms particularly, that he is most prone to order arrests, and to inflict the severest punishments. At such periods, he thinks nothing of issuing a sentence of death.

The weather appears to exercise a great influence over his disposition: at least, it is remarked, that when the north-east wind blows, which always brings on sudden and frequent rains, the Dictator is more frequently, and more violently affected by his hypochondriacal fits: but his good humour is restored when the wind changes to the south-west. Then he sings, laughs to himself, and chats very readily with all persons who approach him.

However unequal his humour may be in other things, there is one laudable quality to which he is constant; I allude to his disinterestedness. He is as generous in his personal expenses as he is economical in the state disbursements, and pays ready money for every thing that he purchases for his own use. His private fortune has not been increased by his elevation; he has never accepted a present, and his salary is always in arrear: his greatest enemies do him justice upon these points. On several occasions he has proved that gratitude was not a stranger to his breast.

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Having been informed that the son of a person in Cordova, who had received him kindly in his youth, was in Assumption, in a state of great distress, he had him sent for, gave him some hundred francs, and appointed him his secretary. He will sometimes also recognise an old school-fellow, and afford him assistance if he be in want of it.

But he instantly forgets all benefits and services,—all claims of relationship or acquaintance, in any one who fails in paying due respect to his authority and person. Not to give him the title of "Most Excellent Signor*," is a crime never to be forgiven; although he himself *thee's* and *thou's* every one, with the exception of a few foreigners. This custom he gradually assumed, as his power became more secure. "You should look upon me with equal respect as upon your own sovereign, and even more," said he, one day to a foreigner; "for I have it more in my power to benefit or injure you than he has." Several of his favourites fell into disgrace, for having attempted to put themselves on too fami-

* He received no letter which was not thus superscribed: *Al excellentissmo Senor. Don Gaspar Rodriguez de Francia, Supremo Dictator Perpetuo de la Republica del Paraguay.*

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liar footing with him; others were loaded with irons for having assumed a power which he had not conferred upon them. Two of his nephews, officers in the regular troops at the commencement of the revolution, were the first whom he dismissed the service, after he had become Dictator, for no other reason than the fear he had that they might presume upon their relationship. For this reason, while in the service, the slightest fault was punished more severely in them than in others; one of them was confined in irons four years for having, at a ball, struck a man who had insulted him, and the other passed a year in the public prison for having employed one of the military band in a serenade which he gave his mistress. In fine, he sent away his sister, the only being for whom he appeared to have any lasting attachment, and who took care of his country-house, because she ordered a *zelador* to chastise a slave.

Jealous to excess of his authority, the Dictator admits of no confidant; he has never been known to take counsel of any one, nor can any one boast of ever having exercised the slightest influence over him. If, sooner or later, he yields to the lot which appears to be reserved for all oppressors of their country, he will have only himself to blame.

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Whilst I have thus endeavoured to give a sketch of the political life of Francia, I have abstained from all reflections; but, in tracing his history, and marking his gradual progress to absolute power, becoming a Consul first, then Dictator for life by force and stratagem; in looking next at his military government, and the state of blockade in which he placed his country by means of the system of licenses; looking I say, at this complete annihilation of trade at the very time when agriculture and manufactures were improving, and above all, regarding that inflexible temper which governed on the one hand, and the state of servitude which it produced on the other: contemplating all these things, the reader will not fail to recur to the history of another man and of his reign, which, though conducted upon a vaster scale, serves, as well as the recent annals of Paraguay, to confirm this ancient axiom—" that of all the passions of mankind, the love of power is the one which it is most difficult to subdue."

FINIS.

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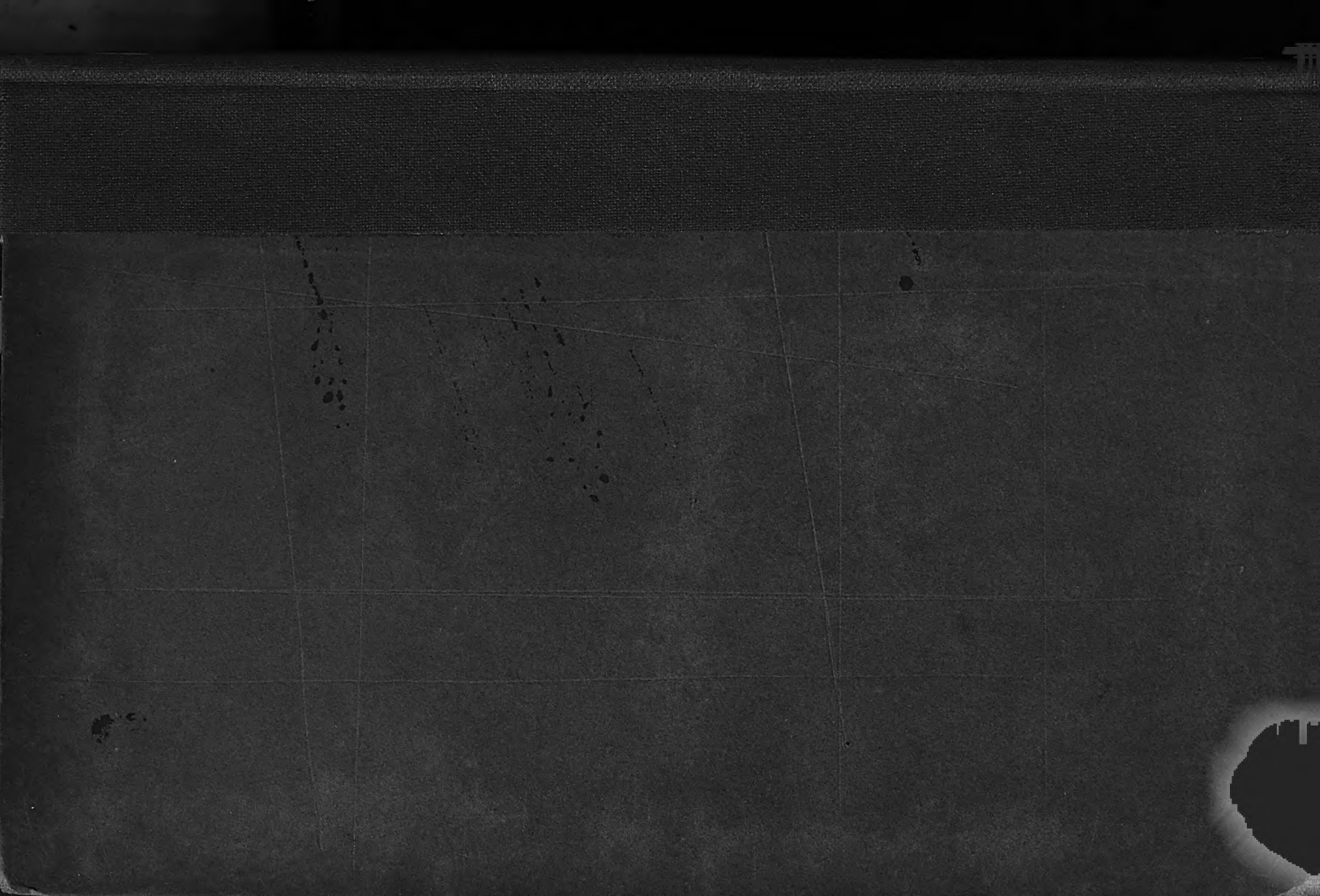
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